How To Be Your Own Private Detective

Private Investigator Reveals How

You Can Easily Find

Out Anything About Anybody!

by Gerald Stein

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WARNING!

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Neither the author nor the publisher of this book are engaged in the practice of law. Nothing whatsoever in the book should be construed as legal advice!

Several places in this book the author discusses the secret video and audio taping of private conversations. Also discussed is the obtaining of various information through pretext conversations. Private detectives actually use such methods and techniques in various localities and in such ways as his attorney advises him is legal in his particular locality.

The practices of secret video and audio taping, as well as obtaining certain information through pretext, are regulated by different laws in different states. The laws may also vary from city to city and county to county within a state.

For the above reasons, the reader is hereby warned and advised to seek the advice of a competent attorney before attempting such methods and techniques in his or her local area!

The liability of this author and this publisher is strictly limited to the price of this book.

Introduction

To be candid, Gerald Stein is an alias - I don't want my fellow private detectives to know who I really am because they will be upset with me for revealing the secrets of the trade and make life difficult for me. Better to be safe than sorry!

This book is neither a "pure" textbook, nor is it a true "how to" book. The approach I decided to take is both informational and practical. As the title of the book implies... you are going to quickly learn how to be your own Private Investigator... and easily be able to find out almost anything about anybody, anywhere!

When you hire a Private Investigator to do a job for you, he or she will usually charge you $500.00 to $1,000.00 up front as a retainer fee. The retainer covers about ten hours of work at which time you'll start to incur additional charges at the rate of $100.00 per hour or so. As you can see, when you learn to do your own investigations, you can easily and quickly save yourself many times what you paid for this book.

A Private Investigator's stock in trade is information. Just as to a journalist or nonfiction writer, the who, what, why, when, where, and how of a situation are very valuable commodities. "Who is doing what to whom? When and where are they doing it... how and for what reason?"

Whether you want to catch your mate cheating, check up on a business partner or employee, find out if a new acquaintance is who or what they claim to be, or even if you are just "nosy" about certain facts... You are going to learn where and how to find the information you are looking for. You will learn what questions to ask of whom and how to interpret the facts you receive.

You'll be able to get almost every fact or piece of information you desire with no more equipment than a pen, paper, telephone, perseverance, and your own two feet. For those few cases where you may need to use some type of electronic surveillance, I'll tell you where you can get the equipment you need and in what circumstances you are allowed to use it.

In every state in the nation, you are allowed to be your own Private Investigator. No license or permission from anyone or any government agency is required. You must NOT however, represent yourself in any way as a Private Investigator. If anyone must know... you're merely a private individual looking for information. You also may not under any circumstances charge or accept a fee from anyone else for what you do!

Experienced investigators could also find this book to be profitable reading. If you learn just one thing that you haven't learned before... that one piece of information could very easily solve an important case for you.

Many people wonder and have asked the question, "just how does one become a real Private Investigator." The following answer to that question covers most states in the United States.

No one is going to become a private detective by reading this book or a hundred others. It takes years of experience to become a competent private eye. This book however, will give you a starting point and a well rounded education in the basics.

Approximately forty states require some sort of license to become a Private Investigator. Various agencies such as the State Police, State Department of State, State Consumer Affairs Bureau, and others issue P.I. licenses. A telephone call to any Private Investigator listed in your local telephone book yellow pages will get you the information of which (if any) agency in your state issues P.I. licenses.

The usual requirement necessary to become a licensed P.I. is a minimum of three years of investigative experience with either a local, state, or federal government agency. If an individual has worked full time for another Private Investigator for a period of three years, they are also usually qualified.

Some states give an examination and some issue licenses based upon experience only. For example, in New Jersey, five years experience is required, but there is no examination given. Florida requires only two years experience and has no examination. In New York it's three years experience plus an examination. California requires three years and an exam.

To become a private investigator in any state, an individual must have a clean record. If they have ever been arrested it must have been for only a very minor offense. They must be fingerprinted, bonded and in some states insured. A few states require you to be insured but not bonded.

You must complete a rather lengthy application and give a considerable amount of personal information. Business references are also usually required. You are then examined by the license issuing agency if an examination is required. The whole process generally takes from three to six months before you are finally licensed.

Most states which regulate Private Investigators do so very enthusiastically. I have found however, that unlicensed private investigators can move around at will as long as they are careful. An individual in any case can act as their own private investigator without a license.

Any individual may also conduct investigations for an attorney or a law firm without a license... if they are a full time employee of the law firm. You may conduct private investigations only on behalf of the law firm and relating only to the cases your employer is handling.

That is not to say it is legal for an individual to work for ten different law firms on various cases and not have a license. In most states this would be illegal and

the individual can be prosecuted under various statutes.

If the reader is serious about becoming a private investigator, I hope you can use this book as a guide to seek employment and utilize whatever information you have obtained from my book as a stepping stone.

In addition to showing you how to be your own private detective, you're going to learn how to save yourself a bundle of money... if and when you should have the occasion to hire a Private Investigator. You'll learn to do much of your own "scut" work. "Scut" work is the preliminary work a Private Investigator does at the beginning of a case to develop some background for an investigation.

On a number of occasions, I've had clients come to me with most of the basic data in hand. They saved themselves hundreds and sometimes thousands of dollars during the course of the assignment.

I have taken many actual cases and used them as examples throughout the book. By following the step-by-step tactics I've used in solving those cases, you'll be able to relate them to, and solve many of your own similar cases.

There are many character names used throughout this book. These names are fictional and any resemblance to anyone living or dead is strictly coincidental

With phone numbers in a constant state of flux, some of the numbers listed here may become out-of-date. You should check with information to get the latest number should the one listed be disconnected.

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CHAPTER I

Searching Public Records

This chapter is by necessity, one of the longest in the book. Some may find it to be fairly dry reading compared to later chapters. I urge you however, to not completely skip this one. Much of the material in the chapters which follow, relates back to what you'll read here. If you must skip to the back to read more "juicy," interesting material, try to at least skim this chapter first. The facts and figures presented here are the bones and muscle supporting the heart and soul which follow.

Much of the information you will ever want or need to know about any person or property... can easily be obtained in your city or county Hall of Records or County Courthouse when you know where and how to look.

Information recorded in Halls of Record and County Courthouses is PUBLIC INFORMATION. Its recording is paid for by your tax dollars and is recorded there for your use as well as any other member of the general public.

You will usually find the government employees in the Halls of Record or County Courthouses both friendly and helpful. Smile and act nice and they will respond in a like manner. You are not required to state why you are searching for information. In other words, when you approach one of these public servants, smile and say something like, "could you please tell me where I can find information on ....." Stop right there and wait for an answer. They don't need to know and usually don't care why you need the requested information.

You'll also learn how to obtain valuable information from certain reference books at your local public library. You'll find out how to exploit the Freedom of Information Act to get sensitive facts and information not ordinarily available to the general public.

Most of what is contained in this chapter requires only a telephone, notebook, pen and perseverance. However, you can only get so much from public records. You should also start now to develop an address book for names of contacts in utility companies, banks, credit institutions, schools and general industries. Meeting and getting to know these people could be invaluable to you in your quest for information.

1. Registrar of Voters

This can be one of the very best sources of information you'll find anywhere. Every county seat has a registrar of voters who maintains an alphabetical listing of voters residing within that county. Among other purposes, these names are used as a basis for jury selection. Most states also require a current address and other valuable information you may want to know about a person.

The Registrar of Voters is also known as Board of Elections in some states. You can find a person's date of birth, height, color of eyes, employment, previous address, immigration information, and even non-published telephone number is available! Any time you need an unlisted or unpublished telephone number for a person, this is the first place to look.

You can also get valuable information about politicians at this office. They must list political contributions and other personal facts on certain election disclosure forms. Another valuable piece of information contained in the Board of Elections office is school district board member's names. Even if an individual is not registered to vote, they might still be listed on another list in the Registrar of Voters office.

2. Motor Vehicles Department.

In most states you can obtain the identification of all vehicles owned by an individual. The person's driving record, including all license suspensions, and a copy of all ownership records are also available.

In order to get this information by name from the Department of Motor Vehicles, in almost every state (except Massachusetts and California), you must have a full name and a date of birth. If you only know the name of the individual, but not a date of birth, a search cannot be conducted unless the person has an uncommon name. If John Smith was requested without a date of birth, there would be too many names to be sure that you had the right person. However, if you requested a search for Dieter Hazinhorfersen, you would probably get a hit with or without a date of birth because he has an unusual name.

If you want to get an auto or vehicle registration, you must submit either a letter or a form with your name, a return address and an appropriate fee for the search along with a plate number or the owner's name and date of birth. Some states will not give you any information without a plate number.

If a vehicle is owned by a company or corporation, the requester can ask for a copy of the registration application and an officer of the company will be named.

Below is a list of the departments you can write in order to obtain vehicle information or driving history transcripts. Arkansas, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin are the only states that are problems. Be sure to send the required fee.

The following list of states and motor vehicle offices is subject to change. I would suggest calling the state office and verifying the address, fees and forms that might be needed.

Alabama

Department of Public Safety
Driver License Division
P0 Box 1471 Montgomery, AL 36192
(205) 2614400

Records available by mail. $2 fee per request. Written request must include job applicants full name, date of birth and license number. Make checks payable to the Department of Public Safety.

Alaska

Motor Vehicle/Driver Services
Driving Records
P0 Box 20 Juneau, AK 99802
(907) 4654335

Records available by mail. $2 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name, date of birth, license number and signed driver release. Make check payable o State of Alaska.

Arizona

Department of Transportation
Room 325M
1801 West Jetterson Phoenix, AZ 85007
(602) 2558361

Records available by mail. $5 tee per request Written request must include job applicant's full name, dale of birth and license number or social security number. Make check payable to the Department of Transportation.

Arkansas

Traffic Violation Records
P0 Box 1272
Little Rock AR 72203

Records available by mail. $5 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name, dale of birth, license number, reason or request and a signed driver release. Make check payable to Department of Finance See form DR1.

California

Department of Motor Vehicles
Bond and Control Department
P0 Box 944231
Sacramento, CA 92244
(916) 7327529

Records available by mail. S1 fee per request. Requests made without license number are $2. Written request with job applicants full name, date of birth and license number is S1. Make check payable o Department of Motor Vehicles.

Colorado

Motor Vehicle Division
Traffic Records
140 West 6th Avenue
Denver, C0 80204
(303) 8663751

Records available by mail. $2 ee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name, date o birth and, if available, license number. Make check payable to Department of Revenue.

Connecticut

Motor Vehicle Department
Copy Records Account
60 State Street
Weathersville, CT 06119
(203) 5662240

Records available by mail. $5 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name, date of birth and license number. Make check payable to Motor Vehicle [)Department.

Delaware

Division of Motor Vehicles
PO Box 698 Dover, DE 19903
(302) 7364343

Records available by mail. $2 fee per request Written request must include job applicant's full name and date of birth. Make check payable to Division of Motor Vehicles

District of Columbia

Bureau of Motor Vehicles
Driving Records
301 C Street NW, Room 1157
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 7276680

Records available by mail. $2 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name, address and license number. Make check payable to the D.C. Treasury.

Florida

Division of Driver Licenses
Kirkman Building
Tallahassee FL 323990575
(904) 4883

Records available by mail. $2 fee for 3 year record, $3 fee for 7 year record. written request must include job applicant's full name, dale of birth, and license number. Also specify the number of years to be searched (3 or 7) and include appropriate fee. Make check payable to Division of Driver Licenses

Georgia

Department of Public Safety Motor Vehicle Records
PO Box 1456 Atlanta, GA 30371
(404) 6565890

Records available by mail. $2.50 :fee or 3 year record, $3 fee for 7 year record. Written request must include job applicant's full name, date of birth, license number and a notarized release signed by job applicant. Also specify the number of years to be searched (3 or 7) and include appropriate fee. Make check payable to Department of Public Safety.

Hawaii

District Court of 1st Circuit Violations Bureau 1111 Alakea Street
Honolulu, HI 96813
(808) 5485735

Records available by mail. $2 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name, date of birth, license number, release signed by job applicant and a stamped, self-addressed envelope. If requesting more than one record at a time, requests must be listed in double spaced alphabetical order. Make check payable o Violations Bureau.

Idaho

Idaho Transportation Department
Driver Services
PO Box 34 Boise, ID 83731
(208) 3343698

Records available by mail $2 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name, date of birth, license number and signed driver release. Make check payable to Idaho Transportation Department

Illinois

Motor Vehicle Services
2701 S. Dirksen Parkway
Springfield IL 62723

Records available by mail. $2 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name and license number or full name and date of birth. Make check payable to Secretary of State.

Indiana

Bureau of Motor Vehicles
State Office Building
Room 416
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 2322800

Records available by mail. $4 fee per request Written request must include job applicant's full name, date of birth and license number. Make check payable to Bureau of Motor Vehicles

Iowa

Department of Transportation
Office of Driver Services
Lucas Building
Des Moines, IA 50319
(515) 2815659

Records available by mail. $4 fee per request Written request must include job applicant's full name, date of birth and license number. Make check payable to Department of Transportation.

Kansas

Kansas Department of Revenue
Division of Driver Control
Vehicles Topeka, KS 66626
(913) 2923671

Records available by mail. $1 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name, date o birth and license number. Make check payable to Kansas Department o Revenue.

Kentucky

Division of Driver Licensing
State Office Building
Frankfort, KY 40622
(502) 5646800

Records available by mail. $3 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name, dale of birth and license number. Make check payable to Kentucky State Treasury.

Louisiana

Louisiana Department of Public Safety
O.D.R.
PO Box 64886
Baton Rouge, LA 70896
(504) 9256009

Records available by mail. $10 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name, dale of birth and license number. Make check payable to Department of Public Safety.

Maine

Department of Motor Vehicles
Driving Records
State House Station 29
Augusta, ME 04333
(207) 2892733

Records available by mail. $4 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name and date of birth. Make check payable to Secretary of State.

Maryland

Motor Vehicle Administration
6601 Ritchie Highway
Glen Burnie, MD 21062
(301) 7687000

Records available by mail. $2 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name date of birth and license number. Make check payable to Motor Vehicle Administration.

Massachusetts

Registry of Motor Vehicles
Court Records Section
100 Nashua Street
Boston MA 02114
(617) 7273842

Records available by mail. $5 fee per request. Written request musMnclude job applicant's full name date of birth and license number. Request must also include a signed notarized release specifically authorizing the release of information fro the "Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles." Make check payable to Registry of Motor Vehicles.

Michigan

Secretary of State
7064 Crowner Drive
Lansing MI 4891B
(517) 3226109

Records available by mail. $6 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant s /ull name date of birth license number and signed driver release. Make check payable to State of Michigan .

Minnesota

Department of Transportation
Investigations
Drivers License Room 108
St. Paul, MN 55155
(612) 2962023

Records available by mail. $4 (fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name date of birth and license number. Make check payable to Department o Transportation.

Mississippi

Mississippi Highway Patrol
Driver Records
PO Box 958
Jackson MS 39205
(601) 9871274

Records available by mail. $5 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name and license number. Make check payable to Mississippi Highway Patrol.

Missouri

Driver's License Bureau
PO BOX 200
Jefferson City MO 65105
(314) 7514600

Records available by mail. $1 tee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name, date of birth and license number. Make check payable to Department of Revenue.

Montana

Driver Services
303 N. Roberts
Helena MT 596201420
(406) 4443275

Records available by mail. $2 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name date o birth and license number. Make check payable to Driver Services

Nebraska

Department of Motor Vehicles
Driver Record Office
PO Box 94789
State Office Building
Lincoln NE 685094789

Records available by mail. $1 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's s full name, date of birth, license number and a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Make check payable to Department of Motor Vehicles.

Nevada

Department of Motor Vehicles Records Section 555 Wrightway
Carson City, NV 89711
(702) 8855505

$2.50 fee per request. Records available by mail. Written request must include lob applicant's s full name, date of birth and license number Request must also sDecilically state the request is for a "driving record." Make check payable to Department of Motor Vehicles.

New Hampshire

Director of Motor Vehicles
Records
85 Hazen Drive
Concord NH 03305

Records available by mail. 55 fee per request. Written request must include applicant's full name, date of birth and license number. Make check payable to State of New Hampshire.

New Jersey

Division of Motor Vehicles
Driving Records
137 East State Street
Trenton, NJ 08666
(609) 2924557

Records available by mail. 55 tee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name and license number. Make check payable to Division of Motor Vehicles.

New Mexico

Motor Vehicle Division
Driver Services
PO Box 1028
Santa Fe, NM 87504
(505) 8277501

Records available by mail. $4 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's s full name, date of birth and social security number; include license number, if available. Make check payable to Motor Vehicle Division.

New York

Department of Motor Vehicles Public Service Bureau Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12228
518) 4740841

Records available by mail. $2 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name, date of birth and license number. Make check payable to Commissioner of Motor Vehicles IPC

North Carolina

Department of Motor Vehicles Driver License Section
1100 New ftern Avenue
Raleigh, NC 27697
(919) 7334241

Records available by mail. $4 fee per requesl. Written request must include job applicant's full name and license number or full name and date of birth. Make check payable to Department of Motor Vehicles.

North Dakota

Driver's License Division
Records
600 East Boulevard
Bismarck ND 58505

Records available by mail. $2 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name date of birth and if available license number. Make check payable to Driver's License Division

Ohio

Bureau of Motor Vehicles
PO Box 16520
Columbus OH 432660020
(614) 7527620

Records available by mail. $1 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name date of birth and license number. Make check payable to Treasury State of Ohio.

Oklahoma

Department of Public Safety
Driving Records
PO Box 11415
Oklahoma City OK 73136
(405) 4278621

Records available by mail. $5 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name, date of birth and license number. Make check payable to Department of Public Safety.

Oregon

Motor Vehicle Division
1905 Lana Avenue NE
Salem, OR 97314
(503) 3784085

$3 fee. Written request must include driver's full name date of birth license number and reason for request. Request must be on Oregon Form 73548 (985). Contact above of office' to obtain copies of this form. Larger volume accounts may establish a billing program by contacting the Finance Section at (503) 3786912. There is a $25 fee for this service.

Pennsylvania

Bureau of Driver Licensing
Certified Driver Records
PO Box 8695 Harrisburg PA 17105
(717) 7872569

Records available by mail. S5 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name date of birth and license number. Request must by on Form DL2(585). Contact the above office to obtain copies of this !orm. Make check payable to Bureau of Driver Licensing. See form DR2.

Rhode Island

Division of Motor Vehicles
Room 212
343 Harris Avenue
Providence Rl 02909
(401) 2772994

Records available by mail. $3 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name date of birth and license number. Make check payable to Division of Motor Vehicles.

South Carolina

South Carolina State Highway Department Motor Vehicle Division PO Box 1498 Columbia, SC 292160028 (803) 7371215 Records available by mail. $4 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name date of birth and license number. Make check payable to South Carolina State Highway Department

South Dakota

Department of Commerce
Motor Vehicle Records
118 West Capitol
Pierre, SD 57501
(605) 7734127

Records available by mail. S4 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name, date of birth and license number. Make check payable to Department of Commerce.

Tennessee

Tennessee Department of Safeq
Room 1101
Andrew Jackson Building
Nashville, TN 37219
(615) 741395

Records available by mail. S4 tee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name, date of birth and license number. Make check payable to Tennessee Department of Safety.

Texas

Texas Department of Public Safety
PO Box 15999
Austin TX 78761

Records available by mail. $2 fee per request. written request must include job applicant's full name, date of birth and license number. Make check payable o Texas Department of Public Safety.

Utah

Driver License Services
Motor Vehicle Records Section
4501 South 2700 West
West Valley ciq, UT 84119
(801) 5335641

Records available by mail. $2 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name, date of birth and license number. Make check payable to Utah Department of Public Safety,

Vermont

Department of Motor Vehicles
Driver Improvement
120 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05603
(802) 8282050

Records available by mail. $4 fee for 3 year record, S5 fee for complete record. Written request must include job applicant's full name, date of birth and, if available, license number. Make check payable to Department of Motor Vehicles .

Virginia

Department of Motor Vehicles
Information Department
PO Box 27412
Richmond, VA 23269
(804) 2570538

Records available by mail. $3 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name, date of birth, license number and signed release. Make check payable to Department of Motor Vehicles.

Washington

Department of Licensing
Driving Records
Olympia, WA 98504
(206) 7536960

Records available by mail. $3.50 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name, date of birth, license number and reason for request (i.e. employment, insurance, etc.). Make check payable o Department of Licensing.

West Virginia

Department of Motor Vehicles
Driving Records
1800 Washington Street,
East Charleston, WV 25317
(304) 3480238
Records available by mail. $3 fee per request Written request must include job applicant's full name, date o birth, license number and reason for request (i.e. employment insurance, etc.). Make check payable to Department of Motor Vehicles.

Wisconsin

Wisconsin Department of Transportation Driver Record Files
PO Box 7918 Madison, Wl 537077918
(608) 2662353

Records available by mail. $2 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name, date of birth and license number. Make check payable o Registration Fee Trust.

Wyoming

Department of Revenue and Taxation
Driving Records
Herschler Building
122 W. 25th Street
Cheyenne WY 820020110
(307) m7971

Records available by mail. $2 fee per request. Written request must include job applicant's full name, date of birth, license number, signed release and self addressed stamped envelope. Make check payable to Department of Revenue and Taxation.

3. Post Office

Under the Freedom of Information Act, you can obtain from any post office, the name of any particular box holder, current address and a forwarding address if they have moved within one year. The fee is $1.00. However, for the same fee,

an individual can request this information not be provided to others. Most people don't know they can make this information unavailable so very few do it.

4. Property Records

There is only one property records office per county. It's usually within the Hall of Records or County Courthouse. The keys to a record search here are the grantor/grantee indices. A grantor is someone who sells, gives, or otherwise relinquishes something; a grantee is the person who received it.

Records kept include many different types relating to real estate. For example, records of quitclaims, deeds of trust, judgments, and tax liens are kept here. Most deeds do not show the amount of money the grantee paid for the property. A useful but little-known fact however, is that by examining the amount of money paid for tax stamps on a deed of trust, and by ascertaining from the clerk how much such stamps cost at the time the deed was filed, it is easy to calculate the exact price paid for a piece of property!

This becomes more meaningful when used in conjunction with records of liens recorded against a property. The difference between the purchase price and the amount of the recorded liens can be very revealing.

Also kept in the Hall of Records or County Courthouse are map books of every parcel of property within a city or county. Given an address, a clerk can tell you the particular map book location and the appropriate page within the book. This is useful in determining the name of the present property owner and often, importantly, all previous owners. It's also useful for learning who owns or use to own adjacent or nearby properties.

This information can also be used to determine whether someone gave a piece of property to someone else, and to double-check other research at the Hall of Records. A word of caution: data in most of these map books are posted as much as eight months after the date of the transaction.

5. Tax Assessor/Tax Collector:

Generally a part of the County Clerk's or Civil Sheriff's office. This is a good place to look for records concerning anyone who may be responsible for payment of taxes on real or personal property. This includes in some places, tax on boats, airplanes, and office machinery. If you have a situs, (the address or location of where the property is kept) you can learn who pays the taxes on the property.

Note that the person responsible for paying the tax is not necessarily the owner of the property. For example, in some states the lessee of property pays the tax on it. Check in the Recorder's Office for confirmation of ownership.

6. County/City Engineer:

This office is often over-looked for information, but is an extremely valuable source of building records, additions, repairs, demolitions, and other structural changes requiring a permit. You'll usually be able to obtain the name(s) of the permit holder and sometimes a photocopy of the check used to pay the permit fee. This check copy may provide very useful information.

In many municipalities the Engineer's office is also a source of violations against the building. The violations usually list the correct owners of the building because the City Inspectors will have the proper records at their disposal.

This information may also provide a way to learn the identity of officers of a corporation because sometimes the name of the corporate officials requesting a permit will be listed. This is also a good way of finding out the actual owner of a piece of property held in someone else's name.

7. Bureau of Vital Statistics

This office, usually located in your state capitol, catalogs and files birth, death, and marriage records. In all cases, you must have a last name, preferably the full

name, to make a search, since there is no practical way to search by using dates of birth, death, or marriage. Even with a full name, this can be a long, time-consuming search.

Note that in many states, there is no requirement that all marriages be recorded. Thus, although the absence of such a record is not a guarantee the subject wasn't married, the presence of a record would prove they were married.

8. Division of Corporations

The Division of Corporations, in some states part of the Secretary of State's office, has an alphabetical listing as current with tax payments. Lists of each corporation's officers and directors are also maintained.

Also, available here are similar data on limited partner- ships, and listings of general and limited partners by name. The County Clerk's Office usually has a similar listing.

9. Tax Identi fication Number

All sole proprietorships, partnerships, limited partnerships, and corporations must have a tax ID number. An office in the local federal government building will confirm this number on request. Many sole proprietorships however, do not have a Tax Identification Number, but will have the owner's Social Security Number instead. This is also valuable in locating someone's Social Security Number.

10. Reverse Phone Directories

Many phone companies sell reverse directories listing subscribers by telephone number and by address. Unlisted numbers do not appear in this book. If you have the number, you can get the name and address of the subscriber. You can also get a phone number, and a name, by looking up the address. These books are usually maintained at the telephone company's main office and are available

in most public libraries.

11. Medical Associations

These organizations will confirm little more than an individual's license to practice and the specialties in which he or she has been "board certified." Note that an M.D. does not have to be board certified to perform surgery, and than an M.D. who is board certified at... say, surgery, is not necessarily so certified at cosmetic surgery... nor need he be in order to legally perform cosmetic surgery.

12. Professional Licensing Bureau

Anyone licensed to practice a profession will be listed by this bureau which is usually located in the state capitol. They sometimes have a toll-free telephone number and will often be listed in your local telephone directory.

Those listed here include physicians, osteopathic physicians, chiropractors, midwives, nurses, and other medical professionals. Also listed are cosmetologists, real estate brokers, private investigators, certified board accountants, and many others. The information available is limited to verification of a license in good standing and an address where the license is located.

Note that even if there have been numerous complaints against an individual, as long as his or her license is current, no information about this will be reported. If the license isn't current, that's all they'll tell you.

13. Bar Association

Due to fear of litigation, local bar associations will give out little information beyond attorney's name and address, and the fact that he or she is a member of the bar.
An attorney who has committed an infraction of the rules or committed a crime however, will usually be censured by the local or state Bar Association. If his

infraction is serious enough, they will list it as a public record. Usually a person can obtain information about an attorney by checking the law journals in a particular county.

14. College and Universities

Alumni offices will usually confirm graduation or attendance of particular individuals, including the year the person graduated and degrees, if any. No information on grades will be given, and there may be more than one individual with the same name. They have no way of differentiating.

15. Credit Bureaus

Dun and Bradstreet, TRW, or local credit bureaus will not provide information unless the inquirer is a subscriber and can give them the appropriate code number.

The federal law governing the obtaining of credit reports is called "The Fair Credit Reporting Act." This law states that you may obtain a credit report under certain circumstances.

If an individual enters into a business relationship with someone, where a person is extending some sort of credit to them, then it is usually permissible to run a credit report. A violation of this law is a misdemeanor, punishable with up to a year in prison and a $5,000.00 fine!

If someone is a debtor in which they owe someone money, the creditor may run a credit search to ascertain their credit worthiness. The creditor may also obtain a credit report if the debtor skips out.

16. Federal Aviation Administration

The FAA in Kansas City, Missouri, will confirm current licensing of any aircraft from its wing number. They will also confirm whether an individual is licensed to

fly an aircraft, and when the license expires. If you ask nicely, they may tell you if a particular person owns any aircraft. You may write the FAA at 601 E. 12th Street, Kansas City, MO 64106. Their telephone number is (816) 374-6220.

If you know where an aircraft is kept or where the person resides, more information regarding ownership is available from the local tax assessor.

17. Federal Communications Commission

The FCC will tell you whether an individual is licensed by them, what kind of license it is, and the expiration date. You may write the FCC at 1919 "M" Street N.W., Washington, DC 20554.

18. Veterans Administration

The VA will provide some information on patients in VA Hospitals. To confirm prior service in the armed forces, address your written inquiry to the Records Depository for the particular branch of the service, 1520 Market Street, St. Louis, Missouri 63103. It will take many weeks, but eventually you can learn whether the subject was in the service and if so his serial number, dates of service, whether he was drafted or enlisted voluntarily, as well as the date and type of discharge.

19. Coast Guard

Lists various vessels by name, owner and registration number. Not all boats are listed. Sometimes the Department of Motor Vehicles has a record in the state regarding a boat which is registered under a certain length, usually thirty to thirty-five feet. Anything larger would be listed with the Coast Guard. Otherwise, the Bay Constable or the Marine Division of the Police Department will have a record.

20. Local Court Records

Civil courts are constituted at various levels depending on the upper limit of the monetary award they can make. All courts within a given state follow the same rules and try cases to the same limit. Usually, each court's records are maintained only at that courthouse, though some of the largest cities - Los Angeles and New York for example - also keep copies in one or more central locations. The lack of a central index makes it necessary to search all courthouses in a city. In Los Angeles County, for example, there are 26 municipal court locations where civil matters are tried. One must visit them all in order to check on all such matters tried within the county.

A.

Adoption courts rarely allow access to their records.

B.

Child protection courts generally have no public records.

C.

Criminal courts try felony and misdemeanor cases. Arraignments related to state charges are normally handled at the municipal or district court level, but trials of felony matters are held in superior court. Federal arraignments and trials are held in federal courthouses. In each case, all records are normally held at the same location as the court in question.

D.

Domestic relations courts handle divorce actions. Plaintiff - defendant indices are kept, as in all civil matters.

E.

Juvenile courts do not generally have public records.

F.

Municipal courts (also known by several other names) have damage award limits higher than small claims courts, but lower than superior courts.

G.

Probate courts handle estate matters and name changes. To find out if someone has legally changed his or her name, look up whichever name you already have, as these cases are listed under both old and new names, by year. You are entitled to view the record, but there is rarely anything of value in it. Reasons for a change of name usually are not given.

H.

Small claims courts generally have award limits up to $3.000, or considerably less in some states.

I.

Superior or county courts, known by other names in some states have no upper limits of damage awards.

21. State Supreme Court

Divorce records are usually kept in this court. Sometimes Domestic Relations Courts handle this matter, but our experience has been that the State Supreme Court usually awards the divorce decree. In some courts, this is a public record. In others you are only allowed to get the index number, judge of record, attorneys of record, the plaintiff and defendant, and the date the matter was

resolved. In some states you can obtain the entire file for review and make copies of the file.

22. Federal Court Records

Federal courthouses are usually in or near the county seat, and handle civil, criminal, tax and bankruptcy cases. They also adjudicate civil matters between citizens of different states. For example, if an Arizona resident is involved in a traffic mishap in Nebraska with a driver from Minnesota, any questions of liability and damages will be handled by the federal court. Plaintiffs and defendants may file motions and submit evidence at the federal courthouse nearest their respective residences.

23. Federal Bankruptcy Courts

Bankruptcy actions are filed in special federal courts. Note that, depending on the nature of the filing, records may be in any or all of these locations within a bankruptcy court: Chapter 7 (bankruptcies, for individuals, partnerships, and corporations), Chapter 11 (reorganization, for partnerships and corporations), or Chapter 13 (temporary relief from creditors, for individuals only). Bankruptcy cases are filed in the court having jurisdiction over the filer's residence. Note that this isn't always the nearest courthouse.

24. Federal Civil Courts

Records indicate all civil matters and also those related to lawsuits involving federal regulatory agencies, such as the ICC, FCC, and so on. These records also include copyright infringement, copy rights, etc. Patent matters are handled in a separate court in Washington, D.C. So are tax and customs matters.

25. Federal Criminal Courts

Most criminal charges are brought in state courts because most felonies - murder, rape, assault, and so on - are state matters. However, any crime

committed on federal land, such as on a military reservation or in a VA hospital, is tried in a federal court. Other federal crimes include kidnapping across state lines; racketeering; mail, wire, and securities fraud; and virtually all crimes involving interstate commerce.

26. Using Plaintiff and Defendant Indices

If someone has been sued or initiated a suit, the index needed to locate the records is called a plaintiff/defendant index. The plaintiff brings the suit; the defendant, as the name implies, defends himself against the plea brought before the court by the plaintiff.

Record indices are either on microfilm or in one of two huge volumes for each year. One part of the index is an alphabetical listing of plaintiffs; the other lists defendants. There is a separate book for each year. If you don't know what year to look in, you should look at least as far back as 18 years after the birth-date of the person you're checking, if known.

27. Using the Civil Court Record

Civil records are kept on file virtually forever, and anyone has the right to examine the entire court file. This is important to follow up on, because all the plaintiff/defendant indices disclose is that a suit was filed. You have to see the file itself to find out whether the suit was trivial or substantial, and how it was resolved.

Once you've determined the existence of a file by searching the plaintiff/defendant indices, fill out a request to view it and give it to a clerk, who will locate the file and bring it to you. Under penalty of law, the files cannot be removed from the office. Copies of part or all of the file can be obtained for a small fee, or you may hand-copy. Some people have begun using the new battery-operated, pocket-sized photocopiers. Most clerks allow this because it saves them time.

28. Using Criminal Court Records

After the case has been completed - in other words, after conviction, sentencing, and the exhausting of all appeals - records of convictions are open to the public. If a defendant is acquitted, he cannot be tried again on the same charge. The court records are destroyed, except for a judge's minute order, which will indicate the disposition of the case.

Transcripts of criminal trials are prepared by court reporters and become part of the file. Also in the file are lists of witnesses, all evidence obtained through the discovery portion of the trial, and all formal pleadings both by prosecutors and defense counsels. Also included are judges' rulings on these pleadings, all letters and testimony given to the judge after the jury's finding... but before sentencing, a minute order that gives the name of the penal or mental institution to which the convict was sent, and the name of the probation officer if probation was ordered.

Criminal records are kept until the convicted party has served his sentence and/or probation, and then usually are destroyed. There is no requirement for destruction, but the courts are drowning in a sea of paper and most old records are destroyed to make room for new. Rarely - almost never -will probation officers, prison officials, or mental hospitals provide information in response to a private inquiry. In some states, they are prohibited from doing so.

29. Freedom of Information Act

Although it's not public information, the F.B.I., the C.I.A., as well as many other government agencies, local and state as well as federal, may have information which could be very valuable to you. The Freedom of Information Act of 1974 gives you the right to access such sensitive and sometimes embarrassing facts if said facts would not compromise national security or ongoing court cases.

To retrieve information under the F.O.I. Act, address your request to The Freedom of Information Officer, of the specific government agency from which

you are seeking the information. For example, if you are seeking information from the Federal Aviation Administration, you would contact their Freedom of Information Officer and request the information you are seeking. An example of such a request for information under the F.O.I. Act is printed in the back of this book.

These agencies usually charge between $10.00 and $60.00 per hour for searching their records, plus twenty-five cents per copy. Your total cost, of course, depends on the amount or volume of information you have requested.

If you are denied access under the Freedom of Information Act, you may appeal the denial within thirty or forty-five days after you received notification of denial. The agency then has twenty working days after it receives your appeal letter to respond. If you are again rejected, you can take the matter to U.S. District Court.

In court the agency will have to prove the withheld records, or the withheld portions of them, are covered under one of the exemptions listed in the Act. If you win a substantial portion of your case, the court may require the government to pay court costs and reasonable attorney fees for you.

30. Social Security Numbers

Social Security numbers are assigned in a way that you can tell where they were issued. This can be very useful to find out where someone lived when they first got their social security number. Since this is usually when they were very young, this can be useful to discover where someone was born or raised which can then lead you to a trail of other useful information. The chart at the end of the book lists the numbering scheme based on geographical origin.

31. A Dirty Business

Here's an item which certainly does not belong under the heading of public records. No book on investigations would be complete however, without a short discussion of garbage picking!

Yes, garbage picking. As the title above implies, it's a dirty chore but can often be oh so rewarding when searching for information about an individual or a company.

Americans discard garbage by the thousands of pounds each year and companies discard by the ton. They think nothing of throwing away papers every month which could reveal very sensitive facts about themselves.

After bill paying time each month, most individuals put telephone bills, credit card and installment statements, personal letters, and hundreds of other pieces of personal information into their garbage. Many also discard bank statements, stock or bond statements, and other valuable financial data. Could be a good place to find out where a person's assets are located. So... if all else fails to turn up information you need, consider going through a person's garbage.

How to get it? Simple. Just call the Department of Sanitation and ask what day they pick up garbage on a certain street. You then show up there the night before and do your dirty work. Depending on the method of disposal, you can

usually just take the whole bag, remove it to your home or office, and go through it at your leisure. Hold your nose!

CHAPTER II

How To Locate Anyone

When a client asks us to find an old friend, relative, school mate, or a deadbeat..., we always ask them the following questions:

1. Do you have their full name?

2. Do you have their last known address?

3. Do you know their date of birth?

4. Do you know their Social Security number?

5. Does he or she drive?

6. Do you know where they work?

7. Do you know what kind of business they are in?

8. Do you have an old or current telephone number?

9. Do you know if they have family?

10. Do you have any telephone numbers of friends or relations in another state or area code?

11. Description of individual.
You would be surprised at the number of clients who can't answer question number one. I have consulted with clients who only had a first name, but with gentle prodding came up with some of the other information which proved to be valuable.

Most people seeking another person is not looking for someone on the FBI's Ten Most Wanted list. They are usually looking for someone they had contact with over the years. Sometimes they want to find someone to buy a piece of property or make an offer to the person regarding a business transaction. Sometimes a person wants to locate old classmates for a reunion.

After reading the first and subsequent chapters of this book, you will see there is a certain format in locating people. We usually start with the Board of Elections information because it is the most readily accessible and easiest to obtain. It is also the most informative because it gives dates of birth, additional addresses, telephone numbers, employment, etc.

From this it leads into motor vehicle searches which is another extremely valuable public record in locating individuals, as well as their vehicles. From motor vehicles, we get an address either from the registration of their cars, or the person's drivers license.

We can then search the property records in the particular county to find out if the person owns property or rents. If they rent instead of owning, we can contact the landlord and get information from them.

If our target has left that address and the landlord doesn't have a forwarding address, you can then visit the Post Office and fill out a Freedom of Information request for the change of address.

Sometimes a landlord or another individual who knows the party you are searching for, might tell you what kind of work they did. You can then check

with the union if they were a union employee, or Professional Licensing, if they are a professional. You may also check one of the lesser licensing bodies, such as Consumer Affairs. In some states, the Department of State might have a listing for an individual, especially if they own a business.

One of the most important ways to locate someone is through their Social Security Number. Many times when we ask an individual for the Social Security Number of the target person they are able to give us one. We can then trace them through a network of computer data banks to which we have access.

Another way of obtaining a Social Security Number is through the landlord who might have a security deposit and is required by law to keep a Social Security Number for income tax purposes. Sometimes we can trace an individual through their school records and also obtain a Social Security Number through the school.

Many of the sources of information listed in this book can be used in a combination of ways to locate people as you can see from the following example.

Assignment:

Manny Cruz wanted to find an old girlfriend who lived in Brooklyn, New York ten years ago. He knew her old name but believed that she might have gotten married and changed it. He did not have her exact address but knew the neighborhood and had queried many local residents..., and drew blanks from all. We took on the assignment for a minimum fee of $500 and found her in three hours. Everything we did, Manny could have done for much less money.

The first thing we did was send an investigator to the Board of Elections in Brooklyn and conduct a search of their records. Mary Jones was registered to vote from an address that was in the old neighborhood. We obtained her date of birth and learned that she was a licensed nurse.

We requested drivers license information from the Department of Motor Vehicles. This printout indicated Mary Jones had a drivers license under her maiden name but changed it to her married name a few years ago. She married a Peter Giambrone and her car was registered under Mary Giambrone from a new address in Albany, New York.

We then checked the directory published number for Mary Giambrone from 100 Elm Street, Albany, New York. We also checked professional licensing for a nurse's license under Mary Jones/Giambrone and found she was licensed under her maiden name from the same address. Client was happy and we were $500 richer.

Case Analysis:

Three different public record sources were used. Board of Elections is public anywhere in the U.S. Look up the address of the Registrar of Voters and go in person. The fee is very inexpensive or free. The search can be done by name only (alpha search) or by address. If you know an address, the clerk can look it up and tell you if the person registers from the address. If you don't have an address however, the alpha search is mandatory.

If the person has a common name, you might get multiple records. You then eliminate people from the information contained on the voters registration card, a/k/a buff card. If there were ten Mary Jones registered in Brooklyn, we would have to eliminate nine by the information we obtained from the client.

Ten years ago Mary Jones was twenty-five years old, blue eyes, blonde hair and was 5'7" tall. Four of the women registered were in their fifties. Three of the women were 5'2" in height. Two of the women had brown eyes so were eliminated from consideration. One Mary Jones was 5'7" and had blue eyes, but indicated she previously had lived in California. The remaining person was our subject who had always lived in Brooklyn.

The motor vehicle search was even easier. Given her name and date of birth,

the motor vehicle computer did the work for us. For a fee of $4.00 (in New York - varies slightly elsewhere) a record can be found by giving them the information you have. This can also be done for license plates. If you know the license plate number, they will tell you who owns the vehicle, the address, make and model of car and insurance carrier. A written request takes two weeks or more. Of course, if you know someone who has access to a motor vehicle computer account, it takes only a few minutes.

Professional licensing was contacted because she indicated on her voter registration card she was a nurse. In most states, the agency that licenses physicians, nurses, accountants, engineers, and dentists will give information to the general public about professionals who are licensed such as date of birth and registration dates.

Case Summary:

Contacts used:

None

Public Records:

Board of Elections
Department of Motor Vehicles
Professional Licensing
Post Office

CHAPTER III

Suppliers of Information

One important aspect of investigations is having good contacts for equipment and information.

No private or government investigator has all the answers. We have many contacts within the industry and in various government agencies and private institutions, but many
times we need equipment and software from various suppliers.

Some suppliers sell only to private investigators, security firms, and government agencies. If however, you are a serious amateur or own a business that requires information on suppliers, the following can be very helpful to you.

There are many suppliers of information throughout the U.S., who are basically wholesalers of information. They obtain their information from data bases and then resell it at a moderate profit. The following suppliers are listed for your use. However, some will not deal directly with the general public. They must be contacted directly to learn how you can utilize their services even though you are not a private investigator.

-Information Resource Services Company (I.R.S.C.)
3777 N. Harbor Boulevard, Fullerton, CA 92635
1 (800) 841-1990 or California 1 (800) 321-2278

I.R.S.C., is a supplier of public records that can be retrieved electronically by computer modem and software you are required to purchase from I.R.S.C. The software costs approximately $250. Contact a sales representative and they will tell you how to open an account. The information they supply is fairly accurate, fast (usually within forty- eight hours, if not sooner) and reasonably priced. Some of the items they offer are expensive and if you are not careful, you can request many searches for an item and rack up a significant bill. The following is a sample of some of the items that you can order from them:

Combined Searches

CA Asset, National Locate, CA Pre-Employment
CA Background & National Pre-Employment

Individual Computer Searches
Intrastate Consumer Public Findings

Real Property Databases
CA On-Line Statewide (Alpha or Situs)
National Statewide Property (Alpha only)

Individual Public Records
CA UCC / Fictitious Business
CA Statewide Marriage or Death
NV Statewide Marriage or Divorce
CA Superior Criminal Index
CA Superior Civil Index
CA/TX Voter Registration
CA Federal Court Records

Business Databases / Reports
I.R.S.C. Business Credit Report
I.R.S.C. National Business Report

-California Data Base (C.D.C)
2592 Santiago Blvd.,. Orange, CA 92667
Telephone 1 (800) 992-7889 or (714) 542-2727

C.D.C. offers similar services to I.R.S.C., and their prices are a little less expensive. They seem to offer less categories than I.R.S.C., but tend to constantly update their menus. These are some of the items that they offer:

Superior Court, Civil Filings
Superior Court Criminal Filings
Superior Court Probate

Fictitious Business Names

Registered Voter Search

Federal Record Search - California
Federal Record Search - Bankruptcy Court

Consumer Public Filing

Nevada State Marriage Index
Nevada State Divorce Index

Motor Vehicle Records - California

-Prentice Hall on Line
1873 Western Avenue, Albany, NY 12203
Telephone 1 (800) 333-0431

Prentice Hall on Line has not been utilized by us, but an investigator in Colorado advised me they offer a wider range of services and are less expensive than

I.R.S.C. and C.D.C. It might be worth a telephone call to their toll free number to request a brochure, and find if they offer their services to private individuals.

-U.S. Datalink
6711 Bayway Drive, Baytown, TX 77520
Telephone 1 (800) 527-7930

U.S. Datalink has advertised at many of the private detective conventions. I have not used their service, therefore, don't know anything good or bad about them. It appears from reading their literature, they offer basically the same services as I.R.S.C. and C.D.C., but on a smaller scale.

-Easy Link, Western Union Telegraph Company
1 Lake Street, Upper Saddle River, NJ 07458
Telephone 1 (800) 336-3797

Easy Link is a worldwide electronic communication service that allows your personal computer to communicate instantly with any business or individual in the world. In the data bases they allow you to scan are categories such as accounting, advertising, agriculture, food, annual reports from various corporations, banking and finance, articles from magazines, books, and newspapers regarding categories that offer patents, etc. Their prices seem to be reasonable, however you must be careful with all these data bases so you do not bill.

-Nationwide Electronic Tracking, Inc. (N.E.T.)
5440 Beaumont Center, Suite 435, Tampa, FL 33634
Telephone 1 (800) 848-4NET

N.E.T. basically is a wholesaler of information which they obtain from other computer data bases. You do not need a computer however, to utilize their services. They will send you
information by mail or FAX, as well as by computer.

-Real Estate Data, Inc. (R.E.D.I.)
2398 Northwest 119th Street, Miami, FL 33167
Telephone (315) 685-5731

This company supplies the general public with a telephone hookup service through a toll free (800) number to retrieve real estate information from most parts of the United States. They also supply those interested in large quantities, a micro-fiche display with periodic updates which can be used in the office. This is an extremely valuable tool and saves the investigator lots of time and money when doing a large amount of real estate work. It eliminates the need to do an actual search at the County Clerk's Office.

It should be noted however, R.E.D.I. information is only updated every six months to a year. It is quite possible a search on their equipment will show up with no record when in fact, a property transfer does exist. I caution my investigators and anyone who uses this service to verify the information to make certain it is correct. This service might be good for the amateur investigator who needs information without going through a whole setup.

-Nationwide Information Services, Inc. (N.I.S.)
4433 West Touhy Avenue, Suite 550, Lincolnwood, IL 60646
Telephone 1 (800) 235-4565

N.I.S., supplies information via computer, for the private eye. This company has no membership fee and claim to be less expensive. They are basically a wholesaler of information as well.

There are many more companies which offer these services. However, these are the most widely known.

Basically, what these services offer are a short cut to searching records, but if you are in a hurry, it is better to go to the source in person, if you are within driving distance. My staff uses data bases mostly for out-of-town cases.

CHAPTER IV

Electronic Gadgetry Suppliers

In doing electronic surveillance or counter-intrusion investigations, the investigator is only as good as the equipment he utilizes. There are a few companies that sell electronic equipment to the public. I will list those as well as some of the suppliers that sell to the industry and law enforcement.

-The Spy Store
164 Christopher Street, NYC 10014
Telephone (212) 366-6466

This store front is located in the Greenwich Village section of Manhattan. It is probably the most unlikely place you can imagine for a store that sells spy equipment. They do however, have a fine selection of video, audio and counter-intrusion devices that can detect hidden microphones, or bugs in telephones and in rooms.

Their staff is very knowledgeable regarding their products and are extremely helpful. The owner, Bobby Leonard, is one of the most competent businessmen selling these devices and is very innovative. Their prices are moderate to high, but the quality of their equipment is excellent. At present they seem to be a leader in the field of electronic counter-spy equipment and have been written up in most of the major magazines, both in the United States and Europe.

-Communications Control System (C.C.S.)
160 Midland Avenue, Portchester, NY 10573
Telephone (914) 934-8100

C.C.S. has been the leader in electronic counter-intrusion devices for many years. They have offices in Washington, Miami, Beverly Hills, Houston, Paris, and London. They sell a high quality electronic counter-intrusion device, but they have the reputation of being extremely expensive. Their items are geared primarily to the rich businessman.

-International Logistics Systems, Inc.
72 Ralph Street, Belleville, NJ 07109
Telephone (201) 759-0007

This company sells a fine selection of counter-measure equipment. They also sell voice scramblers, executive encryption terminals, telephone number decoders, etc.

Their people are very knowledgeable of their product line. Their prices are competitive, but as with all these companies, you should shop the prices.

-Faurot, Inc.
26 Nepperhan Avenue, Elmsford, NY 10523
Telephone (914) 592-4604

Faurot's Crime Detection and Equipment is one of the oldest companies selling identification, security, and crime detection equipment. They supply police departments and private investigators with a tremendous variety of top quality equipment.

-Sirchie Group
612 Gravelly Hollow Road, P.O. Box 789
Medford, New York 08055

Telephone (609) 654-0777

This company has their own fingerprint laboratories. They run a school which teaches scientific crime detection to law enforcement as well as private individuals. They have a number of people who can testify as expert witnesses or give technical services. This company is run by Aubry L. Hall who is vice president of technical services. He is very knowledgeable and extremely professional. You can contact the company for a brochure with a specific description of their services.

CHAPTER V

How to Develop Confidential "Inside" Contacts

How many times have I heard, "if I only knew someone in that company." This phrase usually means they wish they had a contact who could supply them with information.

You probably have seen numerous television shows, where the private eye, Mike Hammer, Matt Houston, or Magnum P.I., picks up the telephone and calls his "source" in the police department and they give him everything he wants over the phone. Or he visits the police department and always talks to a captain or chief of the department. Never does he stoop to speaking to a lowly patrolman or detective. Well, in real life, it isn't done that way. If an investigator has a contact in the police department, or other government agencies, he usually meets them somewhere after work. They don't speak on the phone!

Contacts can be developed in many ways. During an investigator's career he or she makes contacts during the day-to-day activities of the job. These contacts may be police officers, other government agents, or other "insiders."

At one time I belonged to an investigative organization which was founded as a catalyst to disseminate information within government agencies. As years went on, many of these government investigators retired and went into private investigations. There are other organizations (that are too numerous to mention in this book) that are excellent to belong to, but you must be a private investigator or have previous government experience.

An amateur or professional investigator should define what kind of contacts they need. If you are conducting criminal cases, then you want to develop contacts in the police departments, locally, and on the state level, and with federal agents. A good way to make these contacts is to belong to the organizations that police officers belong to. Some examples would be: the Fraternal Order of Police, International Chiefs of Police, various benevolent associations, and of course the local and state private detective associations. In most of these cases, you must be a licensed P.I., or require some experience as a police officer or government agent. If you are involved in the private investigation industry, and wish to gain contacts, it would be good to join some of these organizations. If you do not meet their qualifications for membership, you should inquire if you can join as an associate or auxiliary member.

When seeking information about financial matters, some private investigators develop contacts in banking, credit bureaus, and the stock market, however these individuals tread on thin ice as they might be violating various state and federal laws.

If your investigation is going to be on a sophisticated industry or profession then you need to know the "inside lingo" of any of these industries . . ., their trade publications are invaluable for learning what you need to know. With only a few hours of reading, you should know enough to carry on an intelligent conversation about your target industry. Every industry has its own trade publication and sometimes several.

You can easily get a copy of any trade publication without having to subscribe. Go to the reference desk at your public library and ask for a reference which lists trade publications and addresses. Find the name and address of the trade journals which interest you. Write the Subscription Department and request the price of a "single" copy." They might send you a free sample in the hope that you will subscribe. You might also check out magazine stores or large newsstands - many of these are now carrying numerous trade magazines in addition to the usual consumer titles.

Unfortunately is really very simple for unscrupulous persons to develop financial contacts because of lax security procedures in financial institutions. If you have a friend who works in a bank, you might be tempted try to obtain information that is not legally available. Or you might get familiar with the banking jargon, trends and conditions and try to scam bank personnel into giving you information. Some investigators will go so far as to open accounts in various banks and transfer money in and out of these accounts, in order to make valuable contacts. While you might attempt to justify this "ends justifies the means" (the bum owes you $50,000) you should remember that the risk of such behavior is long term room and board, compliments of your state or federal government.

Another way to make contacts is practiced by a very good investigator and contributor to this book, Theodore J. Mullaney. If he knows he must secure information from a company, he looks for a restaurant, lounge, or "watering hole" which the employees of the targeted company frequent. Ted picks out a woman who appears to be friendly and strikes up a conversation with her. He ingratiates himself by buying drinks and being pleasant. After a few visits to the bar he becomes friendlier and tries to find out if the woman is in need of something personally. He tries to fulfill her wishes, assuming that it is not illegal. Once he obtained and gave to his target, tickets to a concert which was already sold out. A week later he asked her for information that he needed about a particular employee in her company. We came out looking like super stars!

On one particular assignment we knew of a male employee at a manufacturing plant. He had information about certain counterfeit designer clothes being shipped out of the plant at various times. The owner of the company was not involved but we could not chance speaking with him. We surmised that our target had an eye for the ladies and had one of our own very attractive female operatives bump into him at his favorite watering hole, the Sportsman Lounge. Our operative took a cram course in football trivia. She visited the bar and due to her limited knowledge but enthusiasm for football he quickly became interested in her. Eventually she found out little bits and pieces about his operation. One time she made a date with him and promised him a delightful

evening. He turned her down because that was the night he was delivering a shipment to his best customers. We kept a close surveillance on him and uncovered his entire operation.

A technique that I have employed for years is keeping an address book by name and occupation of people I come in contact with at parties, business meetings, and especially in law enforcement. My network list is an essential part of my Christmas card list. Hence, when I may call them years after our last meeting, I am remembered as an old friend (and naturally get virtually any information I need).

At any given party, there is someone who works in an industry or profession that might eventually be useful as a contact for information. At one party I met a rather bland middle aged man who was a computer genius. When the topic of computers came up, he lit up like a Christmas tree and took on a completely different personality. I kept in touch with him and a few years later he helped me crack an important case.

Some middle management or mid-level administrative people in government agencies try to enhance their importance to others. I have found these people to be very helpful in getting information. However, some of these people are "one shot deals" because if they can deliver once, they most likely cannot do it again.

An example is a government agent named Harry who I met at a pool party. After the party we invited him on my partner's boat. We also invited a few attractive females dressed in bikinis along for the ride. By the time we returned to the dock, the guy considered us as his best friends in the entire world.

A few weeks later we needed some information about an illegal alien who was selling bogus green cards to fellow illegal aliens. Harry got the information for us but he was a wreck. Apparently, the position he held did not require him to retrieve the data we needed. Therefore, he put himself at risk to obtain the information. He admitted that when he gave us the information, he was trying to impress us with his connections and justified his indiscretion as appropriate for

"getting the bad guys."

I also keep a business card file of people I meet who can be of some help in the future. I have one file of business cards for vendors such as office machine salesmen, computer salesmen, various consultants, electricians, mechanics, photo copier distributors, art gallery managers, and real estate agents. Sometimes these people are invaluable to the investigator when searching for information or assistance.

CHAPTER VI

Personal and Premarital Background Investigations

There are several different types of background investigations.

They include backgrounds of companies, its officers and employees. Last, but not least, there is the personal background investigation. That category is most popular, especially for women who do not completely trust their boyfriends.

Here are a few cases that we completed involving a girlfriend who did not believe her boyfriend was single and an investigation of a single man who did not believe his girlfriend was being honest with him. We also handled a case of a father who did not believe his future son-in-law was as good as he appeared to be.

One day, a very attractive woman, named Kelly Rogers entered our office and asked us to do a background on her boyfriend. He was 34 years old, a New York City Police Detective, and was talking about marrying her in the near future. He claimed he had divorced his childhood sweetheart three years earlier and was very hurt by the whole thing. He wanted to make sure that his next marriage was perfect. He was very warm, considerate and good looking, but on certain holidays and weekends he could not see her. He claimed that as a detective he frequently went undercover and was incommunicado for days.

We told Kelly that by the end of the week we would have some answers for her. She was very concerned he would find out, so we assured her that we

would be very discreet.

We have a retired police sergeant employed by us. He could have easily made some inquiries, but we wanted to use public records so Kelly could make it appear she did this on her own. She could of course, have done the work on her own, just as you can after reading this book.

The first thing we did was to run his license plate that Kelly provided to us. We have a computer link up to the Department of Motor Vehicles, but anyone can obtain this information via public records (see Chapter 1). We learned her boyfriend had the following information on file:

Driver:	Peter Martin
Address:	15-10 208th St, Bayside, NY 11360
Date of Birth:	July 1, 1956
Expiration Date: July 1, 1993	
Height:	5'10"
Eyes:	Brown
Vehicle:	1989 Pontiac 2- door sedan
Vehicle ID:	37H27982543BX1

After ascertaining his home address, we looked up the listed phones in the Cole's Directory, also known as the CrissCross Directory, and learned that there were two listings:

P. Martin 279-1831
S. Sheehan 279-1387

We then sent an investigator to the Queens, NY County Clerk's Office, and obtained a copy of the deed. It indicated the property was owned by Peter and Susan Martin since 1984 and there were no transfers since then.

An investigator was dispatched to the Queens County Board of Elections where a search was conducted of voting records and found that Peter and Susan

Martin were both registered to vote. We wanted a physical description of his alleged wife and to see if she was still registered from the same address:

Voter:	Susan Martin (maiden name) Sheehan
Address:	15-10 208th St, Bayside, NY 11360
Height:	5'5"
Eyes:	Blue
D.O.B.:	August 10, 1959
Employer:	Bayside Diner (waitress)

The information we obtained regarding the house, gave us a good idea he was still married to his wife. Anticipating one of the many excuses Peter Martin might give however, we decided to do some more homework.

A search was conducted in the Supreme Court of Queens County for any actions for divorce commenced within the last four years. A search was conducted at the Clerk's Office under the plaintiff and defendant indices, for the names Martin and Sheehan. Many actions titled Martin vs. Martin and Martin vs. Sheehan were filed, but none that would relate to our subject and his wife.

This information was reported to our client. She still had some doubts however, and wanted more work done.

A female operative called Susan Martin's place of business, and learned that she worked 5:00pm to 12:00 midnight, four nights a week. These nights were the same nights that he usually saw our client, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday.

Our operative went to an insurance agency and obtained plenty of literature about health insurance. She then visited the diner where loverboy's wife was working.

Our operative, who has a very pleasant disarming way about her, engaged Susan Martin in some light conversation while she ate her meal and appeared to

be looking over the insurance literature. She learned a lot about Peter and Susan Martin.

Susan was still married and they had an eight year old son. Her husband was a cop, assigned to a precinct in Manhattan. He worked Monday through Friday during the day and went to classes at night, while his wife worked. Those nights that he stayed at our client's house were probably the nights he claimed to be playing poker.

Our client wanted still more proof that Peter was lying to her, so we decided to photograph Peter and his family. This was not going to be easy because he lived on a residential block where everyone knew each other and parking was at a premium.

We assigned this job to one of our best surveillance men, who used a van disguised as an appliance repair truck. He parked the truck early in the morning, and remained inside until he saw our subject leave the house with his wife, Susan and their child. A few photographs were taken and given to the client. She was finally satisfied that Peter Martin had lied to her. She confronted him with the facts and photos . . . and dumped him like a ton of bricks.

Case Analysis:

Public records were searched which were targeted to give us some background related to the marital status of the subject. The Department of Motor Vehicles started the search with a home address.

Cole's Directory, available in most libraries and some real estate offices, is a compilation of listed telephone numbers supplied by the Telephone Company to Cole, a private company. Cole then categorizes these numbers by address and cross references the addresses to the listed numbers. That is why they call it a CrissCross Directory.

Voting records let us know that a Susan Martin, nee Sheehan, lived in the same

house, and property records helped us to ascertain a relationship. A search of divorce records, indicated that no action had been filed between the parties.

To seal the coffin for Peter, a pretext conversation was conducted with the wife and photos were taken.

Contacts used:

Pretext

Public Records:

Department of Motor Vehicles
Voter's Registration
Property Records
Cole's Directory
Court Records
Surveillance (photographs)

Sometimes, men don't believe their girlfriend and hire us to do a background on them. We had a young businessman named Domenick S. visit our office and ask for help. He had met this gorgeous redhead, Maria Collins at the China Club, a well known dance club in Manhattan. He went out with her a few times and felt he was falling in love. Domenick was embarrassed to hire us because he thought he was intruding on Maria's privacy.

After some questioning, we learned the girlfriend was an actress/model who also had some side jobs as a waitress or hostess in restaurants. She lived in a four story brownstone in New York City and we had her telephone number. She usually called him. When he called her, she would return his call after he had left a message on her answering machine. She wasn't always available for him and he believed there might be someone else. Domenick was not actually jealous, but was concerned that she might be promiscuous, and could be a risk for AIDS.

The first thing we did, was to trace the telephone number he gave us. The number (212) 931-7174 was listed to a Marlene Williams, at 210 East 32nd Street, New York, NY 10016. The Cole's Directory indicated several other people listed in the building.

Illustration:

Page 849 Manhattan Cole's Directory

210 East 32nd St

M. Williams	931-7174
Steve Drakos	931-2242
M. Jones	686-2911
P. Salerno	687-2613

We called all of the numbers and learned that Steve Drakos was the owner of the building and also lived there. He knew everyone in his building and told us that no one fitting our description of Maria Collins lived in the building. He did say that Marlene Williams was a Broadway dancer, and she had a few beautiful female friends visiting quite often. He further stated that very few men came to visit and that Marlene and her friends were very quiet.

So far, we had some information to support our client's suspicions, but there was a lot missing. We told our client that Maria Collins was either a stage name or totally fictitious, and we needed more leads.

Domenick asked us to conduct a surveillance of the brownstone, to see where Maria was going. We conducted three days of surveillance but never saw anyone fitting our subject's description.

Our investigator did observe a tall leggy blonde leaving the building everyday between 10:00 AM and 11:00 AM, and decided to follow her. She arrived at a large office building, located at 1501 Broadway, NYC. The Cole's Directory was consulted and there were dozens of modeling agencies, answering services,

agents, acting schools and some escort services listed.

A search was conducted for a business certificate for a business operating under the name Marlene Williams. After searching the Manhattan County Clerk's records, we found a business certificate listing Marlene Williams and Maria Trombetta as partners in Le Beaute Enterprises. Ms. Williams' address and the address of the business were both 210 East 32nd Street, NYC. Maria Trombetta's address was listed as 2731 Carroll Avenue, Staten Island, NY.

We did some further checking, and learned that Le Beaute Enterprises was listed under Escort Agencies in the Yellow Pages. Further checking of sex publications uncovered a few listings under similar names of Le Beaute Escort, Le Beaute of Manhattan and Belle de Le Beaute.

A search of Staten Island voter's, property, and Post Office records proved that Maria Trombetta and Anthony Trombetta lived at that address and owned the house. We also found the house was valued at $500,000.00 with a $50,000.00 mortgage on it. Checking with motor vehicle records, we learned that Anthony and Maria Trombetta each owned a Mercedes Benz, worth about $75,000.00 each.

A criminal record search was conducted which revealed Anthony Trombetta had been convicted of assault with a deadly weapon, attempted murder, extortion, pandering and promoting prostitution. We also learned, that Maria had been convicted twice for prostitution and once for running a confidence scam against single men.

Our client confronted Maria and she admitted the whole story. At first she was indignant, but after a while, she was impressed with the information Domenick had obtained. She told Domenick she was getting out of the business and divorcing her husband who was going to jail for a long time on a racketeering conviction. She wanted to marry my client and become totally legitimate. He told her to get lost!

Last I heard, he was very happy. He married a fashion model and they are now expecting their first child. Domenick S. in this case could have easily saved himself a bundle of money . . . enough to pay for a decent honeymoon by doing his own P.I. work!

Case Analysis:

An investigation is like a tree with many branches. Sometimes the branches overlap. This particular case was quite involved and used many public records that are available to you, the amateur detective.

The Cole's Directory, was very helpful in locating a "base" for the case. It let us know where her telephone number originated, and from there we were able to follow her partner to an office building. This gave us an idea that she was a "business woman" because of her erratic time schedule.

A search of public records, in the County Clerk's Office, was conducted because all businesses must file a business certificate in order to conduct business. A bank will not open a business account for anyone unless they have a business certificate, either as an individual, partnership, or a corporation. Since we had the correct name of her partner, Marlene Williams, we were able to conduct a search and that gave us Maria's real name and home address.

Use of the local telephone directory gave us additional information regarding the type of business they were conducting. By looking up the company name alphabetically, we were able to ascertain it was an escort service.

Again, Voter's Registration Records, Motor Vehicle Records and Property Records, gave us a lot of information about Maria Trombetta because when purchasing a house, obtaining a Drivers License, or when voting, a person does not usually lie about their name or date of birth. It is too difficult and expensive to get the documentation to do so.

Obtaining Criminal Record information is easy if you know the person's date of birth and address, which we got from the Voter's Registration and the Motor Vehicle records. Criminal Records are public records in most states if a person has been convicted of a crime. An arrest without a conviction will not come up on their record unless you have a connection in one of the various Police Departments. For the purpose of background investigations, we prefer to have copies of documented legal action which are contained in the court records.

Public Records:

- Cole's Directory
- County Clerk/Business Certificate
- Department of Motor Vehicles
- Board of Elections
- Criminal Court Records
- Property Records

CHAPTER VII

Is He Really A Doctor... A Lawyer or Just A Lying Bum?

A young woman came to our office and told us she had met a nice doctor at a singles weekend, but had some reservations about him. Our client was Amanda, a thirty-three year old single woman who had been employed by the same law firm for thirteen years. She had a good job, a healthy savings account, and wanted to get married soon because her "biological clock" was winding down.

Amanda's new boyfriend, Brian, was a physician who had no apparent hospital affiliations and his apartment was his office. He claimed to be a psychiatrist and most of his clients came to his apartment. He had a medical degree on his wall which appeared to be genuine, but she wanted to know for sure. Brian also had asked Amanda to invest a considerable amount of money for a medical center he was putting together in a lower income area.

After getting some basic information from Amanda, we started the usual searches. Brian's $75,000.00 Mercedes was registered in his name from the address where he lived. One of our operatives visited the county Clerk's Office and searched the U.C.C. records. Our operative found the Mercedes had a lien on it from National Auto Leasing Corp. This indicated he did not own the car but actually only leased it.

We then checked with Professional Licensing and found that Brian was not a licensed physician. We contacted the medical school from where he received his degree and learned that he never attended the school. This information was

reported to the client, but she wanted more. She was thinking of having him prosecuted, but needed more information about him.

We did a full public record search on Brian in Queens County where he lived. We found no judgments or lawsuits filed against him and a clean police record. With the exception of the lease on his car which was filed in the County Clerk's Office, we had nothing.

We performed a "history search" of motor vehicle records on Brian. This turned up information that he had owned several other vehicles in Westchester County, NY, with an address listed as 38 Chase Road, Scarsdale, NY.

We proceeded to the County Clerk's Office in Westchester County. There our operative learned Brian had previously owned property in this county with Mindy Green. The house had been sold at foreclosure. We also learned he had a number of judgments against him, both personally, and against some companies he was involved with in a fiduciary capacity.

We obtained the business certificates for those businesses and learned Brian Green had owned two different psychotherapy practices. Both had been closed because there were many lawsuits and complaints against him and his companies. We spoke with some of the complainants and were informed he had conned money from several of his female clients. He also had tried to overcharge some insurance companies.

We ran a criminal conviction search and received information that he had been convicted several times for fraud; practicing without a license; larceny, assault, and passing bad checks. In all cases, as a result of conviction for fraud he had made restitution, and usually received a suspended sentence or probation.

A search of divorce records in the State Supreme Court turned up a docket number for a divorce filed by Mindy Green. A further check located a judgment against Brian Green by Mindy Green for non-support. An in-depth search of the criminal convictions, indicated that the complaining party in an assault

conviction was a former girlfriend who had asked for her "invested" money back. Further investigation showed Brian had similar legal problems in the state of New Jersey.

The entire investigative report was given to our client. She asked us to refer the matter to the police. The police were reluctant to do anything however, because no crime had been committed. If and when our client gave a donation to the fraudulent medical center, he could be arrested.

Amanda was incensed and intrigued at the same time. She asked us to prepare a "sting" operation in the fashion of ABSCAM and we accommodated her. We set up a hidden camera with a time and date generator so no one could say the tapes were doctored. The camera was concealed in Amanda's living room and recording equipment out of sight in a closet.

Brian asked her for $25,000.00 for his health clinic. She gave him a check and told him not to deposit it for three days because the funds were being transferred from another bank into her checking account. She asked for and received a promissory note from Brian Green, on behalf of the clinic. His promissory note was fraudulent. If he had signed it personally, we would have trouble prosecuting him, because if he made payments, he could say he was paying back a loan.

The tape and copy of the check were given to the District Attorney. Brian Green's medical clinic was closed before it ever opened. Green was convicted of fraud and his probation was revoked on his previous conviction. He received a much needed "vacation" at the state penitentiary.

Case Analysis:

Some of the basic searches were used, such as: Department of Motor Vehicles and U.C.C. searches.

The U.C.C. search is very important, not only in this case, but in others. It tells you when a person has an official document preventing them from transferring property, such as office equipment, cars, accounts receivable, etc. In this case, it told us he did not own his Mercedes, but only leased it.

Another public record in most states is the list of licensed professionals. We called an 800 number from which we received information that Brian Green was not licensed. Another search that is valuable is the checking of lawsuits filed by or against an individual. Once the lawsuit is filed, it becomes public information.

In the case of Brian Green, we interviewed the plaintiffs, who were suing him and gathered additional information about him. These people are usually eager to spill their guts about such a snake after they've been bitten and are therefore an excellent source of information.

Public records also gave us information about Brain Green's divorce and the subsequent judgments his ex-wife filed against him. This is very easy to obtain by going to the County Clerk's Office and searching the records of plaintiffs and defendants.

Criminal record convictions are a public record and are available to everyone. There are a few states however, that will not give this information unless you are a member of law enforcement. Generally you approach the Court Clerk in the criminal division, and ask for a form which you fill out with the person's name, address, county of residence, and date of birth. You return the following day and they tell you what convictions, if any, were found.

Now you can proceed to the clerk of the court and ask for a certified transcript of the conviction(s). Once you have that, you can ask the clerk for the complaint and indictment. These documents will give a more detailed account of the crimes committed.

We were able to use a hidden video camera in our client's apartment to video record the conversation and transaction between Amanda and Brian Green regarding the investment in the clinic. Video taping is legal. Audio taping however, is not... unless (in most cities and states) there are two people present and one (1) consents to the tape. In this case, Amanda was a party to the conversation, therefore she may audio tape it.

If we were to tape it without anyone's permission, we would be guilty of various state and federal laws. This rule changes state to state, so if you decide to audio tape a conversation, consult an attorney in your locality to make sure you do it legally. Some states require all parties to be so advised.

The tape of the conversation and the check given to Brian was enough for the District Attorney to get an indictment and subsequent conviction. This was a case where the private and public sectors worked well together.

-Contacts utilized:
    District Attorney's Office referral
-Equipment used:
    Video equipment from the Spy Shop
-Public records:
    Professional Licensing
    Department of Motor Vehicles
    U.C.C. Lien Searches
    State Supreme
    Court Judgment Records
    County Clerk
    Property Records
    Supreme Court
    Divorce Index
    Business Record
    Criminal Court
    Record of convictions

CHAPTER VIII

Employee Background Investigations

A good source of business for Private Investigators is the employee background investigation. Since December 27, 1987, polygraphs (lie detectors) have been illegal to use in screening new employees. Therefore, many companies now use private investigators to screen their new employees.

One client showed us a resume of a job applicant which appeared to be too good to be true. He had a degree from a top college, references from prestigious companies, and his salary requirement was about $15,000.00 less than the job should pay.

We were asked to do the usual check on the employee such as references, credit history, motor vehicles, and criminal. The credit search was performed under the "Fair Credit Reporting Act," whereas a person gives you permission to obtain his/her credit history.

The applicant had three credit cards, all paid on time, and one car loan for a fairly expensive automobile. He had no judgments against him, and appeared to have a clean record. His driving record however, manifested a D.W.I. (Driving While Intoxicated), and a D.U.I. (Driving Under the Influence). This indicated he had a possible drinking problem. The summonses had been given in a different county than indicated on his resume.

We then checked his business references by contacting the supervisor at both companies he had listed. They both claimed he was a good employee, punctual and hardworking. We then used a simple trick to verify a reference. We always assume that a reference given, is someone who either knows the job applicant well, or is going to have something favorable to say about the applicant. What we do is check with someone else within the company who is in a position of authority.

Since the job applicant was applying for a position in the research and development area, we called the manager of this division of his previous employer company. We learned he had only worked for this company for a year as an assistant researcher, not a full researcher as listed on his resume. The manager could not tell us exactly what his salary had been, but did say it was considerably less than the applicant had stated. He also intimated that this applicant's performance was less than satisfactory.

The other company listed was contacted. We used the same technique and received basically the same results.

We conducted a criminal record search in the county where he had received his Driving While Intoxicated and Driving Under the Influence summonses. We found that he had been convicted of three robberies. Further investigation uncovered that he stole from three companies where he was previously employed.

We checked his educational references, and found them to be lacking in truth. As expected, he was not hired by our client. We feel the employer probably avoided many future problems by having this individual investigated.

Case Analysis:

When doing an employee background investigation, the methods are easy because the applicant has given you his/her Social Security Number, address, date of birth, and permission to obtain a credit report. In order to obtain a credit history, you must have an account with a credit reporting bureau or know someone who has access to one. If you have made a contact in a bank or collection agency, it's easy because they can legally run a credit check on the applicant.

It is important to note there is a federal law concerning credit called the Fair Credit Reporting Act. It bars anyone from obtaining credit information unless the individual gives you permission or is applying for a credit card, loan, or a co-maker on a loan.

You may also run a credit report on anyone who is a judgment debtor or is applying for some sort of credit for a business transaction. Violation of this law is punishable by up to a year in jail and up to a $5,000.00 fine. Also, anyone violating this law is liable to a civil lawsuit.

The job applicant's motor vehicle record was a public record. A search requested through the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles indicated he had a conviction for Driving While Intoxicated and Driving Under the Influence. These will be listed on the individual's driving history. The county where the tickets were given would also be noted. This is important. Sometimes if a person has received tickets in a particular county, he might frequent that county and have a criminal record there..., while his criminal record in his county of residence is clean.

Since we had his date of birth, we were able to run a criminal record search by visiting the Criminal Court, in the county of residence, or in this case the county where the applicant had received a few moving violations.

Our investigator visited a court clerk filled out a form the clerk provided requesting any criminal convictions for the subject by giving name, address and date of birth. We were given a certified copy of the conviction. From there, our investigator contacted the complainants who happened to be three previous employers and learned he had stolen from those companies.

In checking business references, we very rarely speak to the parties that were given as reference because they might be friends or employees guaranteed to give a favorable reference. In this particular case, this young man had his friends primed to lie for him when anyone called for a business reference. That is why we always check with other people in the company, other than the given reference to obtain what we believe to be the true employment history of the applicant.

We checked with New York University where he claimed to have received his degree in business, and found he had attended for only one semester and dropped out.

As you can see, all items checked by our firm proved to be untrue. These were all investigations the employer could have performed himself or delegated to an assistant. This would have saved his company the $100.00 an hour we charged for the investigation!

Contacts Used:

Trans Union Credit Corporation

Public Records:

Department of Motor Vehicles
Criminal Record Search-Supreme Court Criminal Division

New York University (pretext call)
Business References (pretext call)

CHAPTER IX

Marital Investigations

One of the most exciting and also emotionally draining type of investigation is the marital investigation.

In any marriage, in order to insure a good working relationship, there should be a certain level of trust. There are times however, when one or both parties stray. It is the job of the investigator to ascertain if someone is cheating, and if they are, obtain the proper proof and evidence of the infidelity.

Trust is very important. If one conducts an investigation of their spouse, and they find the spouse is not cheating..., the subsequent lack of trust generated by the investigation could possibly destroy or undermine a good marriage.

The following case studies and case analyses will show some of the seamier, but necessary sides of what an investigator does.

Infidelity makes a fine analogy with the following story. Once upon a time there was a flood. A scorpion came along and could not cross the flooded river. A beetle happened to pass by. The scorpion asked the beetle if it would be kind enough to allow the scorpion to get on its back and ride across the river, since the scorpion wasn't able to walk on water as the beetle could.

The beetle turned to the scorpion and said, "you will sting me and I will die." The scorpion replied, "why would I sting and kill you. I'll be on your back and I would also drown."

The beetle said, "okay, get on and I'll take you across the water." The scorpion got on the beetle's back and half way across the river, the scorpion turned around and stung the beetle.

The beetle screamed, "why did you sting me? Now we'll both drown!" The scorpion answered, "I don't know. I suppose it's just in my nature."

It is just in the nature of many spouses to cheat. There are many reasons for it including a lack of love, lack of interest, waning sexual drive, or the old axiom, "variety is the spice of life."

When clients come to our office to discuss their marital difficulties, we ask the following questions. If the client answers more than four or five of the questions with a yes, we usually tell them they were wise to make the decision to start an investigation. Here are some of the telltale signs that someone is cheating. First are some of the clues indicating a husband might be cheating:

1. Does the husband have a hobby that takes him out of the house at least one or two nights a week. This can be a good indication, especially if the hobby is newly found.

2. Does the husband have a part time job, but doesn't seem to ever have any appreciable amount of money to give to the household.

3. Has the husband forgotten to give the phone number of his part time job to his wife?

4. Is he going to a gym and starting to lose weight, when for many years he had a spare tire around his waistline.

5. Does he leave the house at night to buy cigarettes, or go to the store to buy items he could have purchased during the day? Could he possibly be making telephone calls to his girlfriend?

6. Has he suddenly become clothes conscious, trying to look younger and more attractive?

7. Has he become more sexually active with his wife, appearing to be mechanical about it?

8. Is he avoiding you in bed?

9. Does your husband buy gifts for other people, claiming that they are gifts for clients and business associates? Do they appear to all be female type gifts?

10. Does he own and wear a bracelet, watch, or tie, that you did not buy for him?

11. Is he making frequent trips, claiming to be on the go all day, and not leaving a telephone number where he can be reached,

12. Has he been going out with the "boys" recently when he hasn't done that for years?

13. Last, but not least, has he changed his style of underwear from boxer shorts to bikini briefs?

Here are some clues indicating a wife might be cheating:

1. Has your wife changed her hair color, makeup, and started losing weight suddenly..., when for years she was a frumpy housewife, refusing to

change her appearance when you asked her to.

2. Does she have a new "glow" about her that you haven't seen in years?

3. Is she having conversations with her girlfriends on the phone, and when you enter the room starts speaking in a hushed tone.

4. Does your wife have lingerie in her closet you did not purchase for her and which she is not wearing for you?

5. Has she taken up a hobby that keeps her out certain nights of the week?

6. Has she started to dress stylishly, when for years she only wore jeans and a sweat shirt?

7. And last but not least, do you find birth control pills, IUD's, or diaphragms in her drawer when you have had a vasectomy?

A few years ago, a corporate client of ours, called me into a very secret meeting in his conference room. I had assumed at the time it was about a case regarding corporate espionage. The client introduced me to his best friend who was an industrialist.

The friend became our new client. He owned a number of manufacturing plants and was extremely wealthy. Apparently his second wife, who was about fifteen years his junior, had taken a sudden interest in golf and tennis. She had joined a popular tennis and golf club in their community and appeared to be spending an inordinate amount of time on the golf links and tennis courts.

The wife was still a very attractive woman, always had been a good dresser, and kept herself in excellent shape. Our new client however, had noticed some pieces of super sexy lingerie in his wife's drawer that he had not purchased for her! She also seemed to have a certain glow about her, as he described it, some

what similar to when they first got married.

Our client's father was very ill and was under the care of a physician. His wife, because she cared very much for her father-in-law, naturally came in contact with the old man's physician. She and the physician seemed to have become overly friendly. The physician was an avid golfer and loved to play tennis.

Our client became somewhat suspicious because his wife's father was also a physician, and he felt that maybe there was some hidden affection for the doctor.

Because our client was extremely busy with all his companies, it was not uncommon for his wife to go out of town alone to visit her friends and relatives around the country. On one occasion however, she wanted to attend a golf tournament in California, which made our client suspicious. She picked a time when she knew he could not accompany her because of business commitments, and told him she would be gone for four days.

Our client agonized over his suspicions for approximately a week before calling us in for a consultation. He felt badly about talking to an investigator, but believed it was necessary. Since it was too late for us to investigate her past to see if she was untrue, he asked us to make some discreet inquiries about the wife's present.

The first thing we did was to contact the physician's office (using a pretext), and found out that the doctor had been out of town the previous week for a few days. Our client then obtained, through a business acquaintance, copies of the doctor's American Express bills.

The credit card statements indicated they had stayed at the same hotel, on the same dates. Apparently, in order to maintain an air of respectability, they had obtained separate, but adjacent rooms. We also learned they had frequented the same restaurants for approximately three nights in a row. The price of the meals were charged to the doctor's American Express card.

At that time I asked the client to obtain from the phone company, copies of all telephone calls made from his home telephone for the last three months, especially the local calls (called LUDS). The telephone company does not like to give out this information, but will do so at a customers request. Once we received copies of these bills, we found there was a tremendous number of local calls made from the client's home to the boyfriend's home and office, almost everyday.

The amorous doctor was a bachelor who's home was in an exclusive section of New Jersey. Our client asked that we set up a surveillance there. This was extremely difficult, because in this particular area where the doctor lived, they had heavy security. Each home was an estate to itself. This community was so exclusive, their local police force was actually a glorified guard service. We could not trust the police to keep our surveillance a secret.

One of our operatives was extraordinarily knowledgeable about video cameras and remote control monitoring. The operative set up an automobile which he parked near the house. The auto contained a video camera with a telescopic zoom lens hidden in a rear tail light. The camera was hooked up to a video cassette recorder and a microwave radio relay which our investigators could monitor from approximately a half a mile away. Any movement in or out of the house day or night, could be monitored by our operatives in an area which would not belie anyone's suspicion.

Our investigators were on surveillance for no more than two hours, when the client's wife's car was seen pulling into the driveway of the physician's home. The client's wife exited her vehicle to ring the buzzer for her boyfriend to let her into the grounds. The camera got a close-up of her long-stockinged leg as she slid out of her Jaguar. It was quite obvious she was dressed provocatively, much too provocatively to only be shopping in the afternoon. The wife entered the house. After a few hours, she was observed leaving his house. It was quite evident, even on the video tape, that she was all "aglow."

Surveillance was conducted over a period of four days. We obtained many hours of video tape of the client's wife entering and leaving the premises. Since the video recorder had a time and date generator, the video tape could be used as evidence. A time and date generator records and allows the viewer to see the date and time on the screen as the minutes tick away.

This information was given to our client, who requested that we follow his wife on a particular trip she would be making that week.

Again, he obtained information regarding her American Express card and learned that she had made reservations in advance at an exclusive golf club in Florida. We sent one operative on the plane with her.

As soon as our operative found exactly where the wife was staying, a female operative and I joined them. Again, to keep a veil of propriety, the doctor had reserved a room next to hers. We were however, able to take photographs of them holding hands and acting in a manner indicative of two people having an affair.

After explaining the situation to the hotel manager, he generously gave us copies of the registration cards for both parties which of course, indicated they stayed in adjacent rooms. Obviously, he once was married to a cheating wife.

After following our client's wife and her lover around for a few days, we noted they went to several government agencies in the area. We performed a pubic record search which revealed the doctor was applying for permits to build a medical facility in that township. He was also changing his Voter's Registration to that area.

Further investigation disclosed the doctor had his practice listed for sale in several medical publications. Apparently he was seriously getting set up to make a new life for himself in Florida.

A public record search of motor vehicle records and voter's registration records revealed our client's wife was also making changes. It appeared she too was going to make a new life for herself in Florida!

At no time during this investigation, did she ever mention to her husband that she was seeking a divorce. He was quite surprised by this new series of events, particularly when he discovered that one of his joint bank account had been depleted.

Our client was represented by one of the most prestigious law firms in New Jersey. He immediately had his wife served with divorce papers and froze all their joint assets preventing her from selling any property owned jointly through their marriage. Since she was from a well known and respected family, he confronted her and her attorney with the evidence that was obtained. In order to avoid the embarrassment of a public trial, she decided to make a settlement with him weighed heavily in his favor.

When the case was over, we estimated our client, by having the information we provided against his wife, had saved approximately ten million dollars!

Case Analysis:

In the investigation business, contacts are very important. In this particular case, this was manifested in our client's obtaining the American Express records. This opened the entire investigation because we were able to see what the client's wife did in the past, as well as what she planned to do in the future.

Pretext conversations were also used to secure information concerning the doctor's time schedule.

The record of telephone calls made from the client's home were important. This was done by requesting it directly from the phone company. It was easy since the client lived in the house and the phone was listed in his name. If the phone

had been listed in someone else's name, and you wanted the same information, it would have to be obtained from a confidential contact.

Setting up a surveillance in a heavily secured area is extremely difficult. We solved that problem by utilizing video equipment which we set up in a special tail light enclosure of one of the operative's cars. All the heavy equipment was contained in the trunk. Through a remote control access, we were able to observe the comings and goings at the doctor's home and videotape it.

This is not the type of operation the average middle class citizen can mount. However, some of these techniques can often be used in many less sophisticated cheating scenarios.

We were able to easily obtain additional information through public record searches. These revealed to us that both parties were definitely arranging for a new life in Florida. That information was documented and sent to the client.

Contacts:

American Express
Telephone Company

Video Equipment Obtained:

From Spytech of New Jersey

Hotel Registration:

Hotel Manager's benevolence

Public Records:

Voter's Registration
Motor Vehicles
Property Records
Business Certificates

Though many of my cases concerning marital infidelity concern women who cheat, it saddens me to admit that men cheat in their marriages much more than women. When a female client comes to my office because she suspects her husband of being unfaithful, she is usually right. When a man is cheating, it is usually with someone he works with, or someone he meets through his job.

One such case came to our attention when a client named Mrs. Robinson visited my office. She said her husband, John, was spending a lot of time with a female co-worker. He claimed their work required late hours.

John Robinson was the office manager of a large law firm. His hours were flexible so he took on responsibility of serving legal papers for some of the attorneys in the firm as an extra job.

When his wife called the office in the evening, he was never to be found. His female co-worker named Margo, was the firm's paralegal. She seemed to always be absent from the office during the same hours Mrs. Robinson's husband was out. When Mr. Robinson and Margo were in the office they were always seen together.

Margo at 26 years old, 5'9" in height, with flaming red hair, perpetually tanned complexion, and long muscular legs was the picture perfect harlot. She had an hour glass figure and was divorced.

We requested and received a photograph of the husband, as well as one of Margo which was taken at the company picnic. Margo was the type of woman who could convince a priest to leave the church in a heartbeat.

I advised Mrs. Robinson that adultery was not the only grounds for divorce in New York, but she wanted to be as economical as possible in obtaining the necessary evidence for adultery.

The husband's office was located in downtown New York City. It is very difficult to follow anyone in those maddening crowds.

We knew that Margo Browning lived in one of the other boroughs. A member of my staff checked motor vehicle records and obtained an address for Margo Browning at 10 Sunset Drive, Brooklyn, NY. We also learned she drove a 1989 black Toyota convertible which was registered from the same address. We later learned the car had been a gift from her ex-husband.

In New York City, as well as other municipalities, a license is required to serve legal papers. I visited the office of Consumer Affairs and searched their records for Mr. Robinson. He was the holder of a process-servers license, from the address of 10 Sunset Drive, Brooklyn, NY.

I asked Mrs. Robinson if he had any credit cards, and she replied that he had several. I told her to call the credit card companies and request copies of the bill for the last three months because her husband had misplaced them. Within a week she received copies of the charges from Mastercard, Visa and American Express. These cards indicated restaurants charges and purchases of lots of lingerie.

From the pattern of the purchases shown on the credit card statements, it appeared that on Tuesdays and Thursdays, John and Margo had dinner at one of three favorite restaurants in Manhattan.

On Fridays, John always seemed to purchase lingerie at a store called Ronnie's Place located on Nassau Street in the financial district. This store has an impressive assortment of teddy's, corsets, bras, panties and harem outfits. Also, sexy maid outfits and adult sex toys. Apparently, Margo and John enjoyed each other's company by dressing seductively.

We assumed they would go to her place, and we were correct. We took photographs and prepared affidavits of our observations for her attorney.

We supplied all the information to our client. She knew by now she could have a divorce on her terms, but she still wanted more. John would not want the details of his affair known to his family. Helen Robinson still loved her husband, but wanted to get even with Margo Browning.

Helen Robinson was an attractive 39 year old blond, of medium height, with a well proportioned full figure. She was still confident she could get her husband back, but she needed to find the Achilles heel of her rival.

Mrs. Robinson wanted to crush Margo, so we had all records certified by the court clerk. We also documented his activities at her house for more than twelve days during the month.

The client had a flair for the dramatic, and asked me and my staff to set up a confrontation with her husband and his lover.

I obtained Margo's telephone records and noted a number of long distance calls to Silver Springs, MD. Many were to Steven Browning, her ex-husband. A few more calls were to an attorney, whom we later learned was her divorce attorney.

Ted Mullaney, my associate, was able to secure the divorce records which revealed some important information about Margo Browning.

Ms. Browning had been divorced three years prior to her affair with John Robinson. However, when Margo cheated, she always did it with style! He ex-husband had private investigators document that she had three different affairs with married men. She had been seen going to swingers clubs with each of them. At the clubs, she was observed having sex with other partners, including women. This was all part of the public records.

We also obtained a copy of the final divorce decree and it's provisions. Apparently, Margo had been given maintenance (alimony) and a good portion

of the marital assets. There was a cohabitation clause included whereas, if she co-habituated with anyone for more than ten days in a calendar month, she would have to relinquish the alimony and marital assets.

On a particular Friday night, which was one of the nights of their assignations, we decided to set up a surveillance and film the couple entering the apartment. When they exited the apartment together, the wife was there for the confrontation.

As they were leaving the apartment, walking arm-in-arm, Helen Robinson, two investigators and I, approached the couple. It took them a few seconds to realize that this was John's wife. He started blabbering and making excuses. His wife casually walked over to John and Margo and stated in a very controlled manner, that they had been under surveillance for a considerable amount of time. She told them she knew about Margo's previous marriage and her divorce decree.

At that point, Helen Robinson handed Margo a copy of the tapes, court records, divorce decree, and other incriminating information we had obtained. She then turned to John and said, "Margo's husband will be apprised of this situation, and Margo stands to lose her alimony. John, you will have to work a lot of over-time to pay for her easy going lifestyle."

We later learned that Margo dumped John and pleaded with her husband not to press the alimony issue. John is back with Helen and extremely subservient. Chances are, he will never cheat again. If he does, he will constantly have to look over his shoulder.

Case Analysis:

By using some public records which are available, you can obtain information which can help one spouse find out if the other is lying.

By visiting Consumer Affairs, Mr. Robinson's process-servers license was verified. The search did not cost anything and is available to the general public. It also gave us the address he was using. It verified that Sunset Drive was the same address John was utilizing on his process server's license. A motor vehicle search of the suspected girlfriend, gave us her license and registration which informed us of her address and the kind of car she drove.

Obtaining credit card purchase receipts is extremely valuable. Purchases such as dinners and lingerie can be a great tip off as to what's going on with the husband. A spouse can usually obtain these records if they are living together, and have the account numbers. A good private investigator usually has a contact who can also get credit card records.

The other important source of information is telephone records. We were able to obtain long distance calls because we found a paid telephone bill in the garbage. People who do not suspect that they are being investigated, will throw out garbage containing very important information. We were able to track telephone calls to Maryland and located the divorce records of the girlfriend.

In some states, divorce records are not available to the general public. Since Maryland allows divorce records to be copied, we were able to extrapolate valuable information to help our case.

County or state courts handle divorce proceedings and usually the name of the plaintiff and defendant are listed in the Court Index. When one or both parties are located, the docket number is given and that is the key to finding the record. If the jurisdiction you are searching refuses to let you see the file, you at least have the judge's name, the attorney's name, and the date the divorce was filed.

By getting the terms of the divorce decree, Helen Robinson was able to use the information in her case. A postal verification was also obtained by using the Freedom of Information form. The rest of the case was basic surveillance and undercover tactics.

The client kept her husband and avoided a divorce proceeding. John Robinson will be a good husband, and if he is not, he will constantly be looking over his shoulder.

Confidential Contacts:
Visa, Mastercard, American Express,
Telephone Co.
Video Equipment:
Spytech of New Jersey

Public Records:
Motor Vehicle Department,
Consumer Affairs
U.S. Post Office,
Divorce Court Records

CHAPTER X

Infidelity and Other Dirty Tricks

A few years ago a businessman hired my company to break up his relationship with his mistress. He was a married man who kept an apartment in New York City for his girlfriend. She was an aspiring model/actress/secretary. Our client had contacts in the entertainment industry and occasionally obtained small roles in movies and commercials for her.

The client lived in New Jersey with his wife and three children. He and his mistress, Sandi, had a wonderful relationship until he had a heart attack. While convalescing, he believed that his Sandi was cheating on him. Since Mr. Vogel was involved in the electronic industry, he placed electronic listening devices in his mistress' apartment and on her telephone.

At various times Vogel confronted Sandi with the fact that he knew that she was fooling around. She kept denying it and continued her relationship with the other man.

Mr. Vogel asked us to help break up his relationship with Sandi. Apparently, he did not want to throw her out because he did not want Sandi to tell his wife. He wanted to set up a scenario that would result in her leaving the apartment and her breaking up the relationship out of guilt.

At first, I was leery of taking this case, but when the client presented me with the type-written script which required myself and two other operatives, I was fascinated.

In order to obtain additional information on this female, I asked the client if he would like us to install an infra-red closed circuit TV camera in the bedroom. This TV camera was installed in a brand new television set in such a way no one could tell the TV was watching the viewer, instead of the other way around. We had the television setup connected into a hidden VCR, but had the sound disconnected, so as not to break any laws.

The girlfriend, Sandi, brought her other boyfriend into the apartment and we memorialized all the action on tape. Now the drama begins!

When our client saw who her other boyfriend was, he was fit to be tied! It appears the boyfriend she was meeting in his apartment was a business associate of his whom she met at a business dinner.

Mr. Vogel liked to show off Sandi to his business associates because she was tall, beautiful, and made an excellent appearance wearing the clothes and jewels he had purchased for her.

Sandi's other lover, Bill, was in the carpet business. Our client, Mr. Vogel, had me make an appointment with Bill to see his line of carpeting. I posed as a buyer for a large institution, looking to buy commercial carpeting. Prior to the meeting, I called him for an appointment and informed him I would be bringing my assistant to look over the samples. My assistant, also an actress/model/investigator, was extremely competent, intelligent and beautiful.

When we walked into Bill's executive office, I had my assistant bring in a small portable VCR television setup, used to view promotional tape. At the onset of the meeting, I asked Bill if I could show him a video tape of some of the products that we have been looking at.

Dynamite!

When we started to play the incriminating tape, Bill immediately recognized himself and Sandi in a very compromising position. He became flustered and asked us why we were there. We explained we were private detectives, working on a case whereas he and Sandi figured prominently in a very serious investigation. He assumed from the tone of the conversation and the gist of the information we were feeding him, that he was involved in a very serious matter.

Bill immediately asked that we not show the tape to his wife. He was assured his wife would not see it. We didn't know who his wife was, nor did we desire to know. At that point, we advised him that he should not see this woman again, and to be careful about with whom he spent his time.

Shortly thereafter, the client took Sandi to dinner and arranged for us to meet him. We got on the elevator with him and Sandi. Upon reaching his floor, we exited the elevator and identified ourselves to them. We asked if we could speak to them privately. He allowed us to enter his apartment and following a prepared script, he became indignant at our intrusion into his private life. At that time, he was advised that Sandi was a potential source of trouble for him.

We inserted the same tape we showed Bill earlier into his VCR, located in the entertainment center. After about thirty seconds, Sandi started screaming hysterically. We allowed Sandi to let off some steam and then told her that we were conducting a wide-range investigation, whereas she figured prominently with our client and other men. We gave her the impression that we were hired by Bill's wife, and that we had uncovered her relationship with Bill, but that we had to speak to her in the presence of our client, Mr. Vogel.

She could not, of course deny she was cheating on our client. The client, following his own script, looked totally depressed and hurt.

Sandi did have some sense of guilt and told our client she would be moving out of the apartment within a week, just as soon as she found another place to live.

I didn't tell her at that time we knew of her background. I saved that for last. Prior to our visiting our client and Sandi, we did a background check. Utilizing the license plate of her vehicle, we conducted a motor vehicle search. We obtained her date of birth and previous address.

We then conducted a litigation search in Sandi's county of residence (Brooklyn, NY) and learned she had a number of judgments against her for non-payment of rent, credit cards, and various loans. We did further checking in Brooklyn County and found she had three arrests and served one year in jail for robbery. This information was also given to our client, subsequent to our Academy Award performances.

Our client was surprised, but not shocked. He had felt she might have come from a rough environment, but he did not want to pry into her affairs prior to the revelation of her cheating on him.

Case Analysis:

This case has more twist than a normal matrimonial case, but it had some important aspects which we will analyze.

Our client had violated the law by putting a bug on the girl's telephone. However, it did give him the proof he needed to start a full scale investigation. This is definitely not something I would recommend to anyone, but it was highly effective in this case.

Our installation of the video camera and VCR, in the apartment our client owned and paid for, was legal. However, if our client didn't own that apartment, and had we entered the apartment to install that equipment, we would be guilty of breaking and entering, as well as trespassing. Since the audio portion was disconnected, we did not violate any wire-tap laws because we did not

eavesdrop on any conversations. The video is legal and was the most damaging piece of evidence we were able to obtain in this case.

In getting the background of this woman, we learned she not only owed people money, but was involved in a robbery. This was all obtained in public record searches.

The New York State Department of Motor Vehicles gave us her date of birth from her license plate number, which we ran through motor vehicle records. Since we knew she had previously lived in Brooklyn, we did a full public record search which turned up Civil Court Judgments, Supreme Court Judgments, and court records indicating she had been convicted of three crimes and served time for one of them.

This information was extremely vital to our client because if she had tried to extort money or cause any problems for him, he had this information on her. Again, a situation where an individual could have done their own investigation through public sources, if they knew how to do it.

-Contacts used:
None

-Equipment:
Video camera from SpyTech, N.J.

-Public Records:
Criminal Record
Motor Vehicle Record
Civil Court Judgments
Supreme Court Judgments

CHAPTER XI

Business Background Investigations

In the world of business and finance, there is a type of investigation commonly called "due diligence." Basically this means a company seeking to do business with another company or individual, checks out certain items of information that were supplied to them prior to their purchase of the company, or entering into a business arrangement.

A perfect example of this is Carl Icahn, the master entrepreneur, who purchased Trans World Airlines a few years ago. Mr. Icahn bought some stock in the company and stashed the stock over a period of years, until he reached a certain percentage of ownership of the company. By law, he must inform the Security & Exchange Commission of his interest in buying the airline, after owning five percent.

During Icahn's intended acquisition of TWA, he put certain things in motion prior to making an offer for the stock. The first thing he did was to obtain any information he could about the company, it's directors, officers, finances, accounts receivable, and accounts payable. In order to do this, he hired a team of accountants and investigators.

During the course of acquisition, there were certain bits of information Icahn needed so he would not enter a venture of this magnitude without having the

right information. Much of what he did to check out the company was done through experienced accountants and investigators, but I'm sure some of his staff conducted many of the public record searches and business research themselves. You don't need an MBA from Harvard to perform some of the basic research I will discuss in this chapter.

A few years ago, a client who is involved in the manufacture of P.V.C. (polyvinyl chloride) tubing, used in the oil and garbage disposal industry, contacted us about a joint venture they were considering with a trucking company.

Our client, Reis Co Industries, was a thirty year old corporation that had grown from two employees to several hundred. As with most businesses, they experienced their peaks and valleys. They were now cash poor, but asset rich in manufacturing equipment, excellent client base, large accounts receivable, desirable industrial property, and a tremendous amount of new manufacturing equipment.

Into the picture enters Cappolino Trucking Company, a relatively new company that had grown rapidly in the past five years. They are cash rich, had many trucks and are looking to expand their operation. For the past three years both companies had enjoyed a favorable relationship in respect to Cappolino servicing the delivery needs of our client, Reis Co. Industries.

The Chief Executive Officer of Reis Co. Industries, Mr. Carl Reed, asked that we look into the ownership of Cappolino Trucking. He wanted to make sure their money was legitimate, that it was not mob connected, and that they actually had a healthy thriving business as it appeared on the surface.

After obtaining as much information as possible from our client as well as their attorneys and accountants, we proceeded to conduct various searches which any businessman can easily do himself.

Cappolino Trucking had their main office in an industrial complex, at 1000 Victory Boulevard, Staten Island, NY. We checked the Cole's Directory and obtained the following listings for other companies in that complex.

Cappolino Trucking	728-1300
CCI, Inc.	728-5670
Char Co Company	728-5690

We also performed a public record search in Staten Island and learned that CCI, Inc. had a general corporation tax liability of $13,322.00 with interest for a total of $14,510.00.

We searched the U.C.C. Liens and found several liens regarding Cappolina Trucking, Inc., related to the purchase of CCI, Inc. The liens covered property such as all of the debtors rights, titles and interest to the trucking routes, stops, and customer list to be sold to debtor on June 16, 1986. Apparently, Cappolino Trucking had bought out CCI, Inc.

We also found a U.C.C. financial statement regarding a Citibank Loan to Cappolino Trucking. Citibank had put a lien on all personal property, fixtures of the debtors, etc.

Further investigation revealed Cappolino Trucking sold their accounts receivable to the bank (factoring). When the bank receives payment that would normally go to Cappolino Trucking, they deduct the amount of money they loaned to the company plus interest. These type loans, (factoring) usually work out to a twenty percent service fee per annum!

We learned there was a lien against Char Co Corporation for a hazardous waste compactor purchased for the company, and there was a lien against some of the trucks they were selling.

Further investigation indicated there was a considerable amount of taxes owned by Cappolino Trucking, CCI Inc., and Char Co, Inc.

Our investigator, visiting the Federal Court House, performed a federal record search. He discovered that none of the companies listed above had any judgments or liens against them in Federal Court.

We searched for judgments against the corporations and the principals of the corporations in Civil, Supreme and Federal Courts and obtained transcripts of judgments against Charles Cappolino, President.

We found that Charles Cappolino lived in one of the outlying counties. He had a substantial mortgage on his home which had been paid off quite rapidly within the last few months.

We ran a motor vehicle search on Charles Cappolino and found he had recently purchased an expensive vehicle. It had no liens against it, which meant he had paid for it in cash.

By visiting Cappolino's county of residence, we learned he had a judgment against him regarding a business transaction in which he pledged stocks of his company as collateral.

When the preliminary report was given to our client, they asked us to check the criminal record history of this individual.

The search was done, and we found he had been arrested and convicted of fraud regarding another business, in which he was involved a few years prior.

With all the information we had at this point, we decided to reach out to our friends in law enforcement and find out if the Organized Crime Task Force had any information on this individual. Sometimes a private investigator can share information with a government agency. If they trust you and know you, they will

give you information, especially if you reciprocate. Since we had a possible fraudulent conveyance of business assets, and in my client's opinion a potential scam, we were authorized by our client to share our information with the law enforcement authorities.

We learned the Organized Crime Task Force had an active investigation of the principals of this corporation who started the trucking company a few years earlier. They laundered illegally obtained money through the corporation, developing credit lines and good business references, and purchasing equipment on credit. This company's reason to exist was to build up the business, sell off the assets, pocket whatever money they could, and "bust out."

By obtaining a copy of the deed and mortgage, which had been paid off quickly, we learned this was part of a "golden parachute." The vehicle bought by the company for Cappolino was also part of the golden parachute.

All of our findings were put into report form and presented to our client. At the meeting prior to the closing of the sale of the business, our client Carl Reed dropped the bombshell on the sellers and their attorney.

Since the purchase price was based upon true and honest representations by the seller... and the deal included reciprocal purchase of the stock of Reis Co and Cappolino Trucking..., our client knew if he entered into a deal with them, he would have a tremendous amount of liabilities that were not being disclosed. Our client, of course, decided not to go into business with Cappolino Trucking!

After we completed our case, we read in the newspaper that Cappolino Trucking and all it's officers were indicted as a Racketeer Influenced Corruption Organization (the RICO Act) for doing the same thing to another company they had tried to do to our client. Unfortunately, the other company did not hire an investigator and only after they were ripped-off did they go to the Attorney General's office who prosecuted the case.

It turned out Cappolino and his men were lieutenants in one of the largest crime families in New York City. They were using the company to launder money and front for illegal union activities. They were also using the trucks to transport stolen goods across state lines and on occasion were hijacking one of their own trucks for the insurance.

Mr. Cappolino received eight and a half to fifteen years and most of his underlings got anywhere from five to ten years.

CHAPTER XII

Background Investigations
(Noisy or Nasty Neighbors)

Quite often an investigator will receive an assignment to do some background investigation regarding a particular nasty and/or noisy tenant. Sometimes the landlord hires us, but most likely we're hired by a neighbor being annoyed or harassed by this person.

Many times I hear a story from one of my students who wishes to obtain information about a particular pesky neighbor.

A few years ago a detective we know was contacted by a client who asked him to conduct a search on a woman who lived directly above her in apartment 2C, 100 Main Street, Flushing, NY. The woman's name was Mrs. E. Smith, and had only recently moved into the building. She was blasting her stereo late at night and had all kinds of people coming in and out of her apartment. His client had tried to speak to her in a pleasant manner regarding the situation, but Mrs. Smith was rude, abrupt, and mean.

The landlord would not cooperate with the complaining tenant because he was afraid he might be sued for allowing this woman to act in this manner. Our friend's client hired him to find out about this objectionable person.

There was no telephone listing for E. Smith in that building. He was unable to perform a motor vehicle search because he didn't have her date of birth or a full

first name. The Board of Elections had no record of this woman being registered to vote.

He couldn't obtain information from the landlord about this tenant, so he utilized a pretext to secure information from her utility service. He learned that her gas and electricity was installed on December 1, 1990 and her unlisted phone number was (718) 261-9971. He also learned that her name was Elayne Smith. Utilizing the first and last name, he was now able to do an Alpha search at the Queens County Board of Elections. He found they had an Elayne Smith registered to vote previously from 42-05 Kassena Blvd., Fresh Meadows, NY. It indicated her birth date was July 4, 1954.

He now had a name, date of birth, and an address upon which to base our investigation. He did a motor vehicle search and learned Elayne Smith had a valid Drivers License from the previous address of 42-05 Kassena Blvd., Fresh Meadows, NY. Her license however, had been suspended numerous times for Driving While Intoxicated and Driving While Under the Influence of Drugs. She also had numerous accidents on her driving record and her vehicle registration had been suspended because of the lapse of her car insurance.

His investigator did a public record search and learned there was a judgment by the landlord, Crimley Real Estate Developers, for $6,000.00 for back rent and damages to the apartment.

A check with the Parking Violations Bureau found Mrs. Smith had over $2,000.00 in outstanding tickets unpaid on the vehicle previously registered to her.

He contacted Crimley Real Estate Developers covertly. They confided Mrs. Smith was a "crazy" lady who had been divorced approximately one year before and acted irrationally most of the time. The landlord informed him that she had destroyed portions of the apartment in a rage and was evicted via the City Marshal. He had gone to court for back rent and damages to the apartment. The landlord further stated there was a criminal complaint filed

against her by one of the other neighbors in the building.

He did a criminal record search and discovered Elayne Smith had been convicted of aggravated harassment against one of the tenants in the her building. She had received a suspended sentence and a fine.

All records obtained by his investigator were certified. This information was given to the client who brought it to the attention of her landlord. The landlord now realized he had a potential problem on his hands and made his building manager and custodial staff aware of Mrs. Smith's possible behavior.

Subsequently, this woman caused additional problems in the building and the landlord had Elayne Smith evicted. Unfortunately, the client had to spend money to get this information to the landlord who wouldn't have done anything without the evidence being shoved in his face.

Case Analysis:

Even when an individual lives in the building, their identity could be masked because information regarding this person is not readily available. In this particular case, based on the information he had, there was no Board of Elections, no Motor Vehicles, and no telephone listing. Utilizing a suitable pretext however, he obtained the woman's utility information which gave us the spelling of her first name, a telephone number, and the means of conducting an investigation.

Again, the Board of Elections record proved to be extremely valuable, since he obtained through them, another address for this woman in the same county. By getting her date of birth from the Board of Election records, he was able to run a motor vehicle search. Since she had numerous violations for Driving While Intoxicated and Driving Under the Influence, Motor Vehicle Records gave him additional information about her character.

Public records furthermore proved valuable as he learned there was a judgment against her by her previous landlord. By obtaining a copy of the judgment, he found the basis of the judgment was back rent and damages to the apartment.

Another public record was obtained from the Parking Violations Bureau. In most cities this is part of a public record. In a smaller municipality however, the County Clerk's Office might have a listing of parking violators . . ., possibly under the nomenclature of scofflaw.

Given all the information he had, contacting the previous landlord was relatively easy. Since he was an aggrieved party, he was willing to supply information about this woman. Checking criminal records was useful because she had a conviction for aggravated harassment of one of the other tenants in her building.

If you have a tenant or a neighbor who is giving you a hard time, some of the steps used in this case can possibly aid you in at least obtaining some information about this person, and at best getting rid of them.

Contacts Used:

- Utility

Public Records:

- Board of Elections
- Department of Motor Vehicles

Civil Court Index

- (Judgments)
- Parking Violations Bureau
- Criminal Court Records

CHAPTER XIII

Surveillance and Undercover Investigations

Probably one of the most exciting, and at the same time most boring aspects of private investigation, is surveillance and undercover work. There are many investigators including myself, who detest doing surveillances because on an average eight hour surveillance, seven and a half hours are usually spent drinking coffee, smoking cigarettes, and just generally killing time. Only a half hour or so is actual productive work.

. There are many good surveillance experts however, who have the patience of a saint and can conduct a surveillance for many hours and not bat an eyelash.

There are a few basic rules of surveillance everyone should know. First and foremost, "be able to blend into your environment." If you are surveilling someone who lives in a blue collar neighborhood, or a lower income neighborhood, do not drive a flashy car and wear expensive clothing. If you are following someone who lives in a black neighborhood, by all means have a black investigator. If you are following someone in a white neighborhood, make sure the person is white. Ditto, other ethnic groups. Always blend in!

Before beginning a surveillance, you should get an idea of the area. For instance, is there a school near by? Possibly when the school breaks in mid afternoon, there is a lot of confusion and difficulty in following someone, or keeping an eye on a particular individual. The investigator should always find out about and make allowances for such.

If a surveillance is being conducted in a totally residential area, it might cause difficulty while laying in wait for the individual. It is sometimes necessary to borrow or rent a used van which might have some markings of a service company, an appliance company, or a plumbing company. Otherwise, we'll stencil in some company name to make it look like we are performing a service call of some type in a particular area. Our investigators dress as servicemen so they do not stand out in the neighborhood.

To look like a workman, our investigator will usually wear a blue work shirt, blue pants and sneakers. He can walk into a housing development or garden complex and probably remain in the development for the better part of the day without anyone even suspecting he is an investigator.

It is also important for the investigator to feel comfortable in his or her environment so their nervousness will not be obvious. A person who suspects they are being watched, will sense the investigator is nervous and is someone who does not belong in that particular area.

The most difficult type of surveillance, is an automobile surveillance. The investigator should drive a car that is fast, but unobtrusive. The driver should have lots of change or tokens if tolls are involved on the highway or bridge. If the car is not equipped with a telephone, the investigator should at least have a beeper. In most automobile surveillances, we suggest a male and a female, as opposed to two men in a car. A male and a female looks much more natural.

The investigators should always drive on the right and to the rear of the vehicle they are following. This is basically the blind side. They should stay a comfortable distance away... not too far and not too close. Depending upon the traffic and the type of roadway, it is important you anticipate any sudden maneuver, exits off ramps, or congestion in traffic. We have had cases where there was no traffic on the road, but the person drove so slowly you could practically tailgate him/her as you follow. Eventually the person will look in the rearview mirror and notice the same vehicle has been following him/her for a

length of time.

When following someone who might be going to a prearranged destination on a long highway trip, it is best to drive in front of them on the right side of the road. You then alternate by driving behind them ever so often. Again I emphasize, the investigator should know something about the person they are following. Does the person drive fast? Does this person have a fast automobile? Does this person have a car that stands out in traffic? Does this person have an unobtrusive car that is difficult to follow?

The best way to learn to conduct surveillance is practice, practice and more practice. It's very difficult to teach someone how to conduct a surveillance by reading about it. If you are interested in learning the techniques, go to a busy intersection in a major city. Select one particular person at random and just follow that person. See how closely you can follow and the length of time you can do so without being detected. Write your results in a note book. Give yourself a critique of the surveillance so you know how to do it better the next time.

One of the most interesting aspects of investigative work is the undercover investigation. Throughout all the years I have been an investigator, I have volunteered for as many undercover cases as were available. Members of my staff have always volunteered for various undercover assignments.

The hard and fast rule of the undercover assignment is to put someone into a believable environment. We had a case where a stockbroker in a particular company was alleged to be dealing cocaine during working hours. We put an investigator who had some stock brokerage background into this company. He was able to fit into the environment by selling stocks and keeping an eye on the suspected individual. The investigator was then able to observe this individual selling cocaine. The results were given to our client and this individual was fired.

We had another situation where someone was stealing money from petty cash, as well as stealing supplies and small business machines out of an office. The

suspects were young black and Hispanic men who were working in the mail room. We put in an Hispanic undercover operative who blended in perfectly. After a week or so, we purposely had him get into trouble with the boss. This made him look like a screw-up and the other employees immediately accepted him. Within a few weeks, he was able to ascertain who was stealing what and these individuals were fired.

The same scenario occurred a few years ago in a large clothing manufacturer who experienced losses in their sample department. They suspected one or two middle management people and one of the office staff. The primary target of the investigation was a large German woman who had been with the company fifteen years.

We happened to have an investigator who was of Germanic descent and spoke a little German. We put him into the company as a Xerox technician and he ingratiated himself with this woman. After a few weeks, he began to suspect she was taking some supplies out of the office. On one occasion she asked him to bring a package down to her car. Our investigator took the liberty of peeking into the package and noted certain supplies in it. He entered this in his report.

After gathering additional information about this woman, she was confronted and then admitted she had been stealing from the company. She also gave us the name of her accomplice, another office worker who was stealing and selling some of the company's sample goods on the street.

Before an undercover operative goes into an assignment, he or she should always do some background investigation on the company. Know what the company does and get familiar with that type of business. There is nothing worse than being nervous because you're starting a new job, working as an undercover operator, and of course, trying your best not to be discovered.

Being an undercover operative, is a very exciting job. The operative has the sense of adventure, intrigue, and danger all rolled into one. The undercover operatives however, must not lose sight of the fact they are performing a very

important function in trying to detect pilferage, drug dealing, or any other wrong doing on the job.

In watching the people we've hired over the years, I've noticed undercover narcotics officers and other investigators who specialize in undercover work, walk with an air of slight arrogance, confidence and bravado. No matter whether the investigator be male or female, there's a certain heady experience in working undercover.

Keep in mind that some of the lowest paying jobs in the investigative organization, are undercover operators. Most frequently, undercover operatives are utilized in department stores and supermarkets. They are traditionally underpaid, work long hours, and are on assignment for long periods of time.

These people usually ingratiate themselves with other employees of the supermarket or department store. They then wait to see if they can catch one of the employees they have befriended in the act of stealing. Sometimes the undercover operator will act in concert with the employee so the target employee does not suspect they are undercover operatives. The guilty employee is then confronted and fired.

Very few people are arrested as a result of an undercover operation. Most companies would prefer to fire the employee and be rid of a bad apple, than to prosecute and receive bad publicity for the company.

An exercise in undercover work would be for you to pick a company which is hiring employees. Take a position in the company, make personal observations, and keep notes as to what transpires within the company. I would be willing to wager that if you go into any company that has more than twenty employees, one or two of the employees is either stealing money or goods from the company, cheating the company in time such as leaving early or taking extended lunch breaks..., or is involved in some other illegal or unethical practice while at work.

If you want training in this area, take this practice for a few months, keep a log book, and again..., critique your own report until you feel comfortable doing it.

CHAPTER XIV

Obtaining Information Through Pretext

Once an investigator acquaintance of mine by the name of Doug Crow, was on the witness stand, testifying in a case which involved the true residence of an individual. The individual had claimed he lived in New York City, but he had proven he lived in the State of New Jersey. During the course of his testimony, the opposing attorney stated for the record that his information had been obtained under false pretenses through confidential sources. The attorney requested his testimony be stricken from the record.

The judge turned to him and asked, "is it true you had to lie to get your information?" Doug replied, "yes, if I told the truth, we wouldn't get the right information."

The judge ruled in his favor. He advised the opposing attorney that he was engaged in a profession that uses deceit and treachery to get information, but that is the way to obtain it, and the judge would have to evaluate the information to determine whether or not it should be included in the testimony.

In conducting investigations, either for yourself or for a client, it is nice to get your information from public records. It's simple and "clean" to walk into a government office, identify yourself, and be supplied with whatever information you require. But, that doesn't always happen. Sometimes you have to misrepresent yourself to get to the truth. But bear in mind, you might be

breaking the law and might have to pay the consequences.

When misrepresenting yourself, never, never say you are a police officer, government official, or a clergyman. That is a violation of the criminal law, as well as the state law regarding the licensing of private investigators. Sometimes it pays not to say who you are. By the simple act of omission, people will believe you are someone else, even though you did not state so.

A few years ago, we conducted an investigation of an Irish waitress who was an illegal alien.

She had filed a complaint against our client and we were trying to obtain as much information about her as possible. Theodore Mullaney and I walked into a bar and asked for the manager. When he came out we asked him, in a very authoritative tone, questions about the Irish waitress' immigration status.

At no time did we ever state that we were government investigators, or that we worked for the Immigration/Naturalization Service. As a matter of fact, we never showed any identification and only supplied our first names. This man spilled his entire guts to us regarding the waitress and gave us the information which led to the acquittal of our client from the crime of which he was accused.

We were later accused of misrepresenting ourselves to this individual. We explained to the government agency that we never identified ourselves, we just asked questions and this man assumed we were someone else. Not only did we not get in trouble, but we received valuable information and our client won his case.

Sometimes it is better to appear to be somebody that you're not then to actually state it.

It is always better for someone to develop their own type of "ruse" and use the ruse in a manner they feel comfortable with.

We had one investigator who obtained information from banks by asking for the supervisor when he spoke to the teller. He intimidated the teller in such a way they felt they were speaking with some high ranking executive within the bank, and they did whatever they could to accommodate him.

When our investigator was asked for identification after asking for a depositor's account information, he would become so obnoxious and threatening they would believe their job was in jeopardy and give him the information.

Usually the people from whom you are seeking information are not high level employees. They are basically clerks, account representatives, or bank tellers. They do not make enough money at their job to put up with any aggravation. If you approach these people correctly, you can quickly get a considerable amount of information from them.

Here are a few examples:

Doug Crow needed some information from a local gas and electric utility regarding a Mr. Stevens' utility account. Doug called the account representative for this particular address of 100 Hickory Drive, Hickory, NY.

When the account rep answered the phone, he told her he was Mr. Stevens and had lost my utility bill. She asked for his home address and account number. He explained to her that He lived at 100 Hickory Drive, in Hickory, L.I..., that He was Mr. Stevens, but did not have the account number because He had just returned from a business trip and didn't have any of my papers with me.

He further stated He had been away for a few months and wanted to make sure my account was up to date. He told the utility rep He had called one of my neighbors and was told that my automatic light system was out. He was concerned that maybe the electricity had been turned off.

The Customer Service Representative checked her computer and advised me the account was intact and that he had made payments for the two preceding months. He pretended to be very surprised and asked her if she had my work or business telephone so she could contact me if there were any problems in the future. She said she had a telephone number.

Since part of the information he needed was Mr. Stevens' non-published number, He asked if she had his new number which was 947-3334. She replied, "no, I have your old number," and she proceeded to give me the actual telephone number that was on the account.

At that time he thanked the woman and advised her it was a pleasure to do business with someone who was so helpful to a customer in need. Anytime you get information from someone under a pretext, make sure to "close the door." Don't leave anything hanging so there could be questions about the conversation at a later date.

One of Doug's investigators has a unique way of getting a person's bank account information. He calls the individual whose utility information he has just obtained and advises him that their electricity service would be cut off in a few days because of lack of payment. The customer, of course, has paid the bill and becomes very indignant. The investigator explains he will check the files, and if the customer would be kind enough to tell him how the bill was paid..., cash, check, or money order..., he will check with the Accounting Department and straighten out the problem.

The person concerned with their utility service being turned off is almost always unaware they are giving out information regarding their checking account. At that time the investigator writes down the information, then calls back to explain there had been an error in the computer and everything is now straightened out. This way the person's mind is at ease and he won't question the matter at a later date.

Another way of securing information regarding a bank account, is by finding out what bank is holding the mortgage on a piece of property for an individual. The investigator will then call the Loan Department of the bank and ask for the prevailing interest rates for any mortgage. If the party being investigated has a mortgage that seems to have a favorable rate, the investigator might assume that the individual might have some money on deposit with that bank which allows them a more favorable rate.

The investigator can then call the bank and pretend to be Titled Guarantee Company, saying they are just checking the records to update their files. At that time they can glean some information as to whether or not the person is paying their mortgage on time. By engaging the loan officer in a friendly conversation, they might be able to determine if this party has additional accounts with the bank.

Assuming they do have an additional account and the loan officer makes some reference to it, the investigator can then call the bank and speak to the head teller. Utilizing a suitable pretext he can get one of the tellers to access the account on the computer at their station. At that time, the investigator can state that he is with another branch of the bank and the subject has applied for an additional credit line. He is checking the various references on the application to make sure this is a good customer.

If you can persuade the teller to turn the screen on and acknowledge this person is a good customer..., you can then ask them to check if there are other accounts, savings or checking, and if the accounts are current and up to date. If the teller acknowledges the account is up to date, the investigator might be able to glean additional information as to when the account was opened and a general idea of the average balances kept in this account.

The investigator thanks the teller and closes the door on the conversation. The investigator then calls the bank again and speaks to someone in a different area of the bank who also has access to the same computer terminal. With the information he already has from the first teller, he can then go into the same

routine, except now he has enough information to legitimize the telephone call. Obviously, it sometimes takes many phone calls to get complete information. But remember, you might be breaking the law using this ruse and might have to pay the consequences.

Another way of getting information is to be pleasantly obnoxious to the person on the telephone. An example would be to call the Personnel Department of a company and ask them for information about an individual. Many times a company will say they cannot give this information over the telephone and that they only respond to written requests. That is when you ask the person if you send them a letter, will they acknowledge whether or not this individual is employed at their company.

You then protest to the person that you do not want to send a letter as it will only be a waste of time. You ask that person to please just check whether or not the subject is employed at the company and thereby save both of you some time.

Sometimes the personnel person will do that so you don't waste time sending a letter. Once you get that information, you say thanks and terminate the conversation.

You call the company again and ask for their Benefits Department. You ask them the name of their insurance carrier. After obtaining that information, call the company again, pretending you are a representative of their insurance carrier. At this point, you ask for the target employee on which you're seeking information, and state you are calling regarding a claim the party has filed.

When the person replies they did not file a claim, you then explain you would like to update his/her file because obviously there has been some mistake and somehow there must be a similarity between the subject and another individual within the company or the health insurance plan.

The secret of obtaining this information, is to be as pleasing as possible but at the same time, very tenacious. Pretend you are just a lowly clerk in a big insurance company. You want to close out your file by receiving this little bit of information this individual can supply. Your attitude is that you want to help this person and also help yourself because this is your job. It is such a minute piece of information but you need it for your job. More times than not, you will get the information you are looking for!

One other way of obtaining information from people, is to be more obnoxious than the party you are calling for information. An example would be a building manager who refused to give an apartment number and the length of residence of a tenant I knew lived in the building. The manager explained they do not provide information over the telephone and everything must be in writing.

Sensing this woman's power as the building manager, I immediately told her I was the credit manager of a Rolls Royce dealership. I explained that her tenant, Mrs. Smith, had put down $25,000.00 on a new Rolls Royce and was requesting that I extend $75,000.00 worth of credit for the balance. I then told the building manager I was going to refuse the loan based on her reluctance to give me the simple little bit of information over the telephone.

Since she did not wish to incur the wrath of her tenant who was buying a Rolls Royce, the woman became so flustered that she gave me the woman's apartment number and told me how many years she had lived in the building. Many times even the most arrogant manager, can be made into a whimpering pussy cat.

The secret of all pretext conversations is to know as much as possible about your subject matter before you call for information. Knowledge is power!

Epilogue

Now that you have read this book and hopefully learned some of the secrets... and some of the not so secret secrets of the private eye industry, you might want to put what you've learned into practice. When using public information for your sources, you don't have to worry about making mistakes. You can always return to the agency and request the information again if you didn't have the proper criteria to request the information initially.

When you decide to get creative and make a pretext telephone call however, make certain you have as much information as possible at your disposal before making the call. In most cases, you cannot go back a second time.

The following is a check list you should use when embarking on an investigation. By no means is this list complete. You will want to add other searches to this as you go along.

Lis Pendens
Federal Liens
General Liens
Institutional Liens
U.C.C. Liens
Judgments
Mechanics Liens
Deeds

Mortgages
Assignments
Bankruptcy
Civil Indictments
Criminal Indictments
Board of Elections
Department of Motor Vehicles
Professional Licenses
Business Certificates
Corporate Records
Post Office Verifications
Security and Exchange Commission Filings

One of the fantasies of most private investigators with whom I have spoken is to write a book. I think being a private eye in itself, is living out a fantasy. To be able to write about it is a very heady experience indeed. If you are reading this portion of the book, I sincerely hope you have enjoyed it. I thank you for giving me the opportunity to put some of my thoughts in writing and to share them with you.

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